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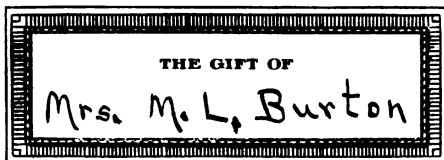
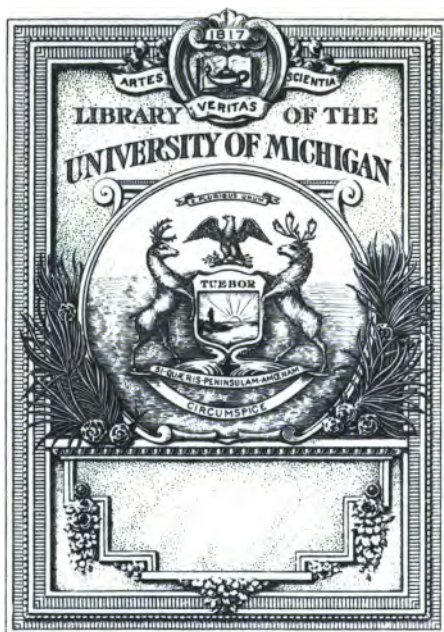
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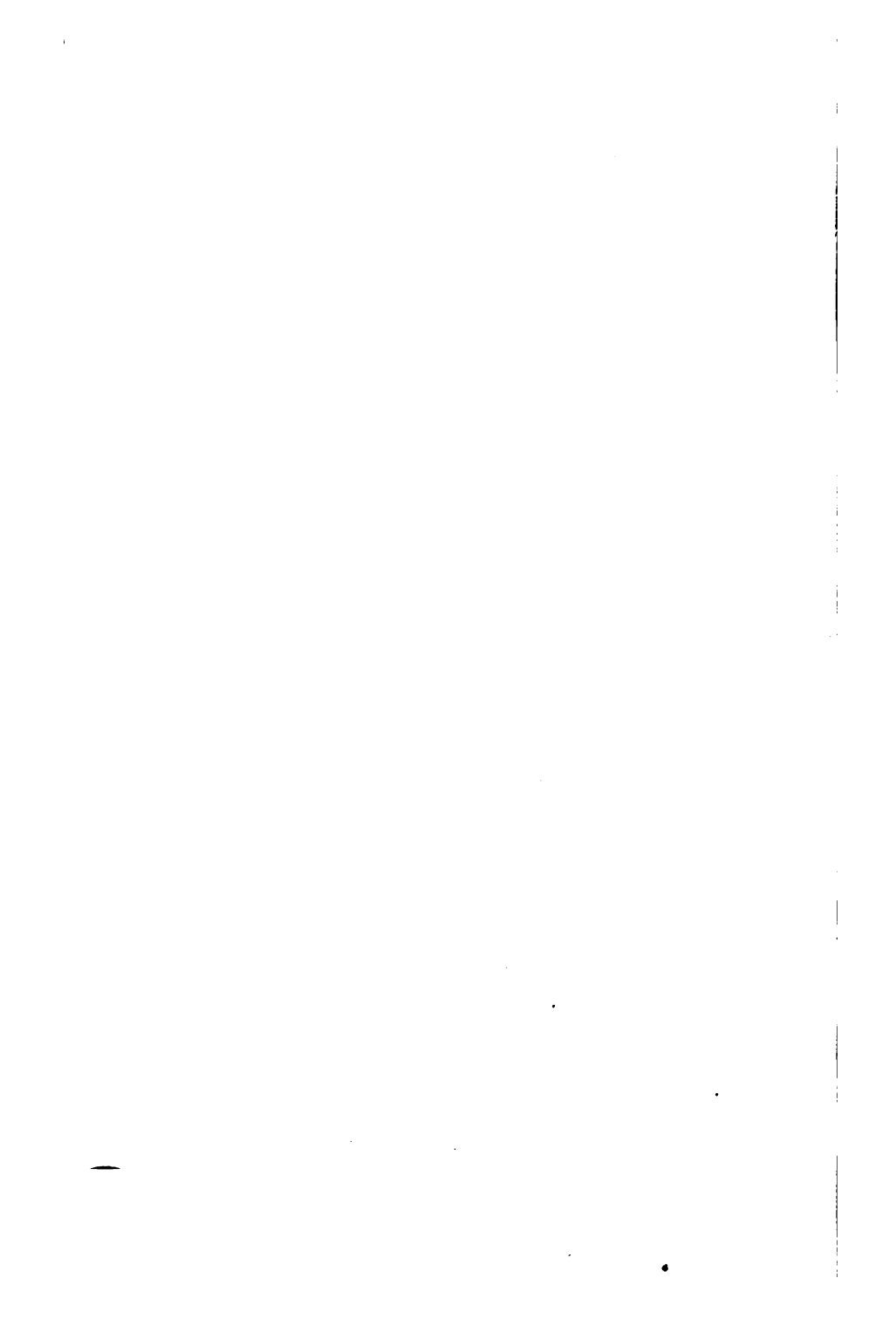
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THE IDEAL ADULT CLASS



THE
IDEAL ADULT CLASS
IN THE
SUNDAY-SCHOOL

**A MANUAL OF PRINCIPLES
AND METHODS**

By
AMOS R. WELLS
Author of "The Teacher That Teaches," etc.



THE PILGRIM PRESS
BOSTON NEW YORK CHICAGO

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PREFACE

The rise of the organized adult class in the Sunday-school world, and its rapid increase in numbers and influence, warrant a book entirely devoted to its interests. Several such books have appeared, all of them admirable, but this volume—whatever may be said for its quality—has at least this reason for existence, that it is the largest and most complete manual of principles and methods for adult classes. It is based upon a long practical acquaintance with those classes, and gathers up a large number of my articles on the subject which have appeared in the Sunday-school magazines of several denominations, including the Baptist and Methodist, but mainly in *The Adult Bible Class Magazine* of the Congregationalists and *The Westminster Adult Bible Class* of the Presbyterians.

As is right, the book starts with a full discussion of the Bible-study of adult classes, for which they exist. The fundamental principles are considered, and a large variety of plans for the class sessions is presented. Then the class organization is treated, with a very complete view of the committees that may be formed and the lines of work that may be taken up, for the school, the church, the community, the nation, and the world. Of course it will be understood that "the Ideal Adult Class" need not elect all these officers, form all these committees, and undertake all these tasks; that would be impossible and undesirable. This book is a little encyclopedia of the adult class,

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and is no more to be adopted straight through than an encyclopedia is to be read straight through. All parts of it, however, it is hoped, will prove helpful and suggestive to every class, whatever its circumstances and condition may be.

AMOS R. WELLS.

BOSTON, MASS.

THE IDEAL ADULT CLASS

I

THE TEACHER OF THE CLASS

THE adult class in the Sunday-school, as we know it, is the product of the last few years. It is a creation of the new Sunday-school stimulus, and in turn it has done much to inspire that stimulus. And the adult class of the present day is so new that it requires a new sort of teacher to guide it in the study of the Bible.

This new sort of teacher must be willing to break with traditions. He must be willing to forego the absolutism of the old-fashioned adult-class teacher, and organize his class with directing officers and committees. He must be ready to adopt a new kind of recitation, or no recitation at all. He must accept a quite new relation between the class and the teacher. In the old days the pupils—the few that came at all—placed the teacher on a pedestal and bowed down before him. In these new days the teacher is only the senior partner in a company of business associates, seeking to do business for the Master.

The ideal adult-class teacher must also be inventive. As he is keen to recognize problems, he must be shrewd to meet them with his own devices. For example, does he note a lack of original work and study? Then he must make all kinds of alluring assignments of home work—the preparation of charts, of map talks, of talks on definite themes connected with the lesson subject,

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the writing of essays, the reading of selections and commenting on them, the conduct of interviews ~~and reporting~~ on them, participation in symposia and debates. He will use his own ideas, and he will search widely for the bright ideas of others, in books and magazines, in Sunday-school conventions and private conversations and correspondence with friends.

And the ideal adult-class teacher must be an organizer. In the old-style class there was nothing to organize. The new-style class, with its large numbers and diversified work, positively needs a set of live officers and many committees. It finds socials necessary. It conducts a class paper. It has class excursions. It comes into relations with other adult classes and with the national organization of adult classes. The teacher is a busy executive, and not merely a lecturer. In a way, this is easier than the old fashion, as the teacher has a fine body of efficient helpers in his work; but the work is far more extensive and difficult, and requires for success the development of new and decidedly brisk faculties on the part of the teacher.

Then, the ideal teacher of an adult class must have faith in the possibilities of the average member of his class. The class will be a failure if the teacher does, or tries to do, all of the work. His aim should be to develop at least a dozen assistant teachers. Believe in your students. Believe that they can make little talks on any subject connected with the lesson. Believe that they can make charts, give object talks, conduct discussions, even write poems on the lesson! Become a Sunday-school Columbus, and set out to make discoveries among your students. You will find rich satisfaction in it.

The best teacher for an adult class will be a "mixer." He will cultivate the social life, in himself and in his

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class. "The Friendly Class" is a capital name adopted wisely by many adult classes. Class spirit is a prime Sunday-school asset. The class socials may be made to rank with the lesson as a spiritual force. The adult class of today is no longer satisfied with the amen corner sprinkled with half-a-dozen saintly ladies. It wants fifty where the old-time class had one. It wants the awkward foreigner, and the young married couple, the doubter and inquirer, the business man, the professional man, the day-laborer—it wants all. And so the teacher must do as his Master did—go out and get them, wherever they may be found. He must be a true fisher of men.

A warm, cheery, hopeful class atmosphere is enough in itself to insure the success of the class. For obtaining this the teacher is mainly responsible. His chief care, even beyond getting in his mind clearly the facts and truths of the lesson and a good teaching plan, should be to put himself in the right frame of mind for conducting the class. He must free himself of stiffness, giving jolly greetings as the members enter, showing a real brotherly interest in each of them and doing this because he has a genuine liking for all. It is quite impossible to overestimate the importance to your teaching of this atmosphere which you will create, and yet this is a matter usually entirely neglected, and allowed to come, if it comes, solely as a matter of chance.

And finally, the ideal adult-class teacher must be, to use another expressive modern term, thoroughly "up-to-date." He must know what men and women are thinking about and talking about, and what is going on in the world. He must be ready to apply the gospel to injunctions, and conservation, and postal savings banks, and rebates, and international arbitra-

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tion. He must know what people are interested in, that he may make them interested in the Bible as furnishing the only solution of the problems that every day present themselves for solution.

Of course I am leaving the main thing unsaid; I am taking it for granted that the adult-class teacher will be a sincere follower of Christ, earnestly seeking to make all men just such eager followers of our Saviour as he is. This should be true of all our Sunday-school teachers. I have named what seem to me to be the additional qualities necessary for ideal success in this special field of the new adult class. And all of this should be easy for one that is filled with the spirit of Christ, since He was ever ready for the new, since He is the great Originator, since He always delights to set men in coöperating companies, since He believes in men more than any one else dares to believe in them, since He gets closer to men than any one else, and since He knows not only all that is now happening in our wonderful world, but all that the wonderful future has in store for the world as well. Who cannot teach when he has such a Teacher?

II

THE HOME STUDY OF THE CLASS

THERE is danger that the adult-class sessions may degenerate into lectures. It is easier to give a lecture than to conduct a real discussion. Older people value lectures and get good from them as younger folk would not. But, in spite of this, there is no doubt that adults as well as children get the most good from their own studies and their own thinking; and to promote home study of the lessons should be the earnest desire of all leaders of adult classes, the teacher, the officers, and the committees.

But it is not easy to get adults to study their lessons at home. They generally think that their studying days are over. They think that it is not dignified to have lessons to learn. Many of them have forgotten how to study. They fear to expose their ignorance in recitations, as younger pupils would not. Altogether, this point of home study is one of the hardest points to carry properly in the making of an ideal adult class.

All the teaching and all the planning of the class must aim at home study, or you will not get it. But you must seek it along different lines from those you would follow with a younger class. No quiz or catechising for adults. They would resent such methods. We must get them to study, not by asking them to con lessons or answer questions of details with which many of them are already familiar, but by assigning them work to do, work of some original value and of patent dignity.

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You cannot get home study without a good study help, such as a teacher's magazine. Make sure that at least one thoroughgoing discussion of the lesson is in the hands of every member of the class. It is well to add to the magazine such books as the members can be persuaded to buy. In the adult class of my own Sunday-school it is our custom to bring to the class, well in advance of the first lesson of a new series, several attractive books bearing on that course of lessons. The books will vary in fullness and cost, but all will be genuine aids to the understanding of the lessons. They will be exhibited and examined, and a committee takes orders for them, having them on hand in time for the study of the first lesson of the series. The book may be a commentary on the Bible book to be studied, or some history of the Hebrews, or some life of the principal character of the lessons.

To aid the teacher in his work, and especially in this matter of home study, an instruction committee may well be appointed. This committee may discover what books on the Bible each member of the class possesses, and make a list of them for the use of the teacher in assigning work to this and that student.

One owns Edersheim's "Life of Christ"; he may be asked to look up points of ancient Hebrew customs. Others will bring points from later lives of Christ, such as Gilbert's. One possesses Smith's "Historical Geography of the Holy Land," or Calkins's, and the teacher will look to him for geographical light on the lessons. One has Trumbull's "Studies in Oriental Social Customs," or Masterman's "Studies in Galilee," and will be able to throw light on the Bible from present-day habits in the Holy Land. One owns Vincent's "Word Studies in the New Testament," or "The Expositor's Greek Testament," and can illuminate the text of

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many a passage. One possesses "The Poet's Bible," and will read some charming poems illustrating Bible scenes. One has Stanley's "History of the Jewish Church," or later histories such as Kent's, and will read many an eloquent passage from those volumes.

Then, too, this home work will be assigned in accordance with the taste and ability of each student. One is fond of the best books, and he may often be asked to bring extracts from the leading authors bearing on the lesson themes. Another is well informed regarding art, and will tell how the famous paintings illustrate the subjects of the lessons. Another is interested in travel, and will read occasionally from books of travel some fine description of the scene you are studying, or make a map and give a talk about it. One is good at analysis, and will get up a helpful chart now and then. One writes poetry, and will occasionally contribute an appropriate original poem. One is a Greek or Hebrew scholar, and will explain many a difficult phrase. One is interested in antiquities, and may be depended upon to treat the ancient customs as reference is made to them in the text. Thus the likings and abilities of the different members of the class will be discovered and utilized.

Further, the occupations of the members will be remembered in assigning home work. One is a lawyer, and to him will be referred questions of the Hebrew sacred law, with comparisons to our modern laws and courts. One is a merchant, and will tell about the ancient coins and trades and will show the bearings of Scripture truth on the commercial life of today. To a teacher will be referred questions of science, to a mother matters relating to the home, and to a physician topics that have to do with the body and its health.

Work assigned in accordance with all these condi-

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tions will be given out well in advance; sometimes, if it is very difficult, several weeks in advance. Occasionally you will call for volunteers for a certain task, in order to cultivate willingness, but usually you will make assignments without previous consultation. It will be necessary, of course, to obtain the general consent of the class, and their agreement, expressed or implied, to meet these requisitions as well as they can. This being the case, the teacher will feel that he can safely send out a set of postal cards every week, bearing simply some such brief instruction as: "For Nov. 12: A five-minute talk on recent temperance progress in the United States." "For Nov. 5: A character sketch of Mordecai. Five minutes." Great care should be taken to make these assignments perfectly clear.

The teacher and the instruction committee will, notwithstanding the general agreement, watch the home work, prodding the pupils, offering to lend books and to help if help is needed, and sometimes calling to inquire what progress is being made.

Sometimes one topic will be assigned to two or more members of the class, that they may help and inspire each other in comparing and discussing their views on the subject. Thus you will enjoy occasional debates, or symposia.

But in addition to this individual work, every session will have at least one proposal for home study for all the class, one question that all will be expected to answer. Announce the question to the class a week in advance. For the lesson on the struggle on Mount Carmel between Elijah and the Baal priests, for example, your question might be, "What suggestions for modern reformers do you find in this scene?" You will choose this question with great care. It must be

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evidently worth while, a question that will appeal to adults, and yet it must require general study of the lesson. And, having proposed it, be sure to bring it up when the lesson is discussed.

The last suggestion applies to all this home work: be sure to introduce it in the class sessions. Make this your first business, no matter what is left out. But plan for no more home work than can be brought with its results into the session. It is not necessary to call upon all for individualized home work every week. Indeed, in a large class that would be impossible. What is essential is to give out enough of this special work to cultivate the study habit, confident that, when once it is thoroughly aroused, it will perpetuate itself.

III

THE SESSIONS OF THE CLASS

THE sessions of the adult class in our Sunday-schools should differentiate it markedly from the classes of boys and girls. In the latter, questions and answers are the rule; in the adult class many other methods must be more prominent. Adults quickly resent catechising. We must get at the same end, but by another way.

We must certainly get at the same end, which is the expression by the members of what they know and think regarding the lesson. No one really knows or thinks a thing until he tells it. If the adults have studied and thought about the lesson they need to say what they have learned and thought as much as children do. But they prefer to give it unforced; there is no need to draw it out from them.

Therefore in the adult class the interrogative mood will be replaced by the declarative, very largely: "We will now hear what Mr. Jones thinks about the character of Joseph." "Mrs. Brown has kindly consented to read an essay on Hezekiah and his reforms." "Mr. Green will now give us a comparison of the schools of the prophets and modern theological seminaries."

So the sessions of the adult class are immensely varied. The members can do far more than children. They have originality. They are experienced and courageous. The most successful teacher is the one that has the greatest boldness in proposing unheard-of things for them to do. Here are some of them.

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The debate is a suitable and enlivening exercise for an adult class, and most lessons give a chance for one. "Is there a personal Devil?" would be a possible subject. "Have miracles ceased?" would be another subject. "Was the main motive of Judas cupidity?" would be another. Select a subject that really has two sides. Obtain leaders, if possible, who believe in the different sides. Make the time limits brief, and hold strictly to them. Advertise the debate. Give some opportunity for general debate after the principal speakers are through. These rules will be quite sure to result in an exercise that will not only be full of interest, but will bring out a large amount of information.

Readings from valuable and delightful books should often be introduced into the sessions. These may be given to those that are less ready to speak, and will serve to work them up to greater confidence. Volumes of sermons will often furnish such extracts as you can best use. So will the standard histories of the Jews. So will the series of biographies of Bible characters, such as those by Meyer, Matheson, Taylor, Whyte, the "Men of the Bible" series, and the "Temple" biographies.

One of the class who is a good student of literature may be asked to give extracts from the poets and the leading prose writers bearing directly on the lesson. Such books as the hard-to-find "Poet's Bible" are invaluable here. Ruskin's Bible references and Shakespeare's and Browning's have been brought together in different volumes. All the great Bible scenes have been described in illuminating poems, one or more of which may well be read by a sympathetic reader during the session. Some of these have been set to music, and may be softly sung, like Tennyson's lovely song,

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"Late! Late! So Late!" Many novels have been based on Bible stories, like Elizabeth Stuart Phelps's "Come Forth!" Dramatic episodes in these may be introduced.

Often the Bible passage under discussion may be presented in some original way. Thus an adult class with which I was once connected used to make much of all Scripture portions that were largely made up of short speeches, assigning them to different members and giving them in regular dialogue form, omitting the narrative portions. This is very effective. Sometimes a beautiful passage may be committed to memory by one of the class and given as a recitation.

Art as well as literature will contribute its share to the success of your class. Find those that are most interested in the great paintings and artists, and appoint them to hunt up those that deal with the various scenes of the lessons and speak of them in the class. Reproductions of the most famous and beautiful of the paintings treating Scripture scenes have been made in abundance during recent years, and may be obtained for a few cents or even half a cent each; these may be shown to the class, as well as the reproductions in illustrated books on the Bible, such as are named in the next chapter.

A symposium is a valuable feature for an adult-class session. It consists of different views of the same character or event or topic by several speakers. For example, you might ask a woman, a teacher, and a lawyer to give their opinions of the character of Vashti. You might call upon a physician, a business man, and a literary student to tell what each thought was Paul's "thorn in the flesh." The symposium lacks the vivacity of the debate, but it suits another sort of theme admirably.

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Occasionally, for variety and to develop certain members of the class, call upon this and that one to come prepared to lead in a discussion on a certain subject. The student will prepare questions and suggestive statements, and, standing before the class, will be the teacher for that particular theme.

Nearly every lesson calls for a map talk. One of the class who is enthusiastic regarding Bible geography will use the class map, or, better, will prepare a simple outline map of his own, and will bring out the interesting facts about the region involved in the lesson events, describing the part it has played in other Bible scenes. Smith's "Historical Geography of the Holy Land" is invaluable here.

Essays (or talks, according to the ability of the member) are very useful in an adult class, and several may be introduced into almost every session, if they are short. There are many other features that may be brought into the sessions, such as original poems on the lesson themes, character sketches describing the principal persons of the lesson, an original story based on the lesson, modern applications of the lesson truth by persons in different occupations—a lawyer, doctor, teacher, business man, day laborer; I speak more fully of these and other plans in the next chapter.

I have sought in this chapter to make the point that the ideal session of an adult class is more like a prepared programme than like the questions and answers of the Intermediate department. Discussion is to be encouraged, but ideally it starts from the class rather than from the teacher. In other words, the study in an adult class is topical rather than verse by verse. It aims at doing things in the big way; and since the Bible is the biggest of all books, it should be treated in the largest way possible.

IV

VARIOUS TEACHING METHODS

USE CURRENT EVENTS

THE newspaper is one of the best commentaries on the Bible. A wise teacher will introduce into the lesson as many illustrations from current events as he can reasonably find. For example, the progress of the conquest of the air, the revolution in Portugal, the disturbance in Mexico, the death of Tolstoi—such events are full of applications to the Bible.

Sometimes it will be well to appoint a committee of one to take five minutes at the opening of a series of meetings of the class simply for a summary of the news of the week that is most important in its bearing on the progress of Christ's kingdom in the earth. Do not force the use of these events in connection with the immediate lesson; the primary purpose will be to show the connection between the Bible and modern life. And never allow the discussion to extend longer than five minutes, simply long enough to introduce this element into the recitation. It will mean variety and freshness and spiritual stimulus.

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S SESSIONS

If yours is a mixed class, it will be a good plan occasionally to part the men and women, and hold separate sessions. The men's division should be led by a man and the women's division by a woman. The former will apply the lesson to the problems of men and the

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latter to those of women. It frequently happens, in a mixed class, that the men hit upon some topic of supreme interest to them, some application of the lesson to business or politics, perhaps, which is of little interest to the women, and the full discussion of it would be a bore to them, nor could they enter into it understandingly. On the other hand, it often happens that a household topic comes up which is of vital interest to women, but with which the men are little concerned. The passage containing the Golden Rule is such a lesson, likely to interest men and women along different lines. So is almost any part of the Sermon on the Mount. In such cases a division of the class between the sexes results in a more practical treatment of the lesson and a discussion that is far more lively. Besides, the very novelty is helpful, and the two divisions will come together the stronger for the separation.

ONE NOVELTY A WEEK

It will be a wonderful help in maintaining interest in the class if the teacher can introduce one novelty a week. Of course this novelty may be repeated at long intervals, when it has become fresh again, but the teacher should provide himself with as large a supply of them as possible, gleaning them from books of methods, from the helps for adult classes, and from Sunday-school conventions. A list should be kept of these novelties, to guard against repetition too soon, and to provide a reservoir of ideas for the future.

One novelty, for example, may be a "conversation" on the main subject of the lesson, the conversers being notified in advance, and perhaps having practised their conversation during the week. Another novelty may be a set of questions prepared by a member of the class and propounded by him. Still another may be a pic-

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turesque account of the lesson event in the form of an imaginary letter or diary. Again, you may introduce a debate, or a lecture by some member of the class, or a series of readings, or a map talk, or a review of some appropriate book. Here are eight novelties, and by the end of the eight weeks you will probably have thought out or learned about eight others; and by that time some of the first may be repeated.

TWO-MINUTE APPLICATIONS

It is an admirable plan to assign to different members of the class the duty of applying the truths of a series of lessons, perhaps a quarter's, along the lines of their respective special interests. For example, if some one is particularly interested in the labor question, ask him to seek in all the lessons for points that apply to the relations between labor and capital, and be ready to bring out these points when called upon. Another may be specially interested in world peace, another in temperance, another in missions, another in social or political reform. Each of these will watch for truths connected with his subject.

The teacher may dub these "secretaries"—"the labor secretary" of the class, "the temperance secretary," etc. Each should be strictly limited in time, say to two minutes; otherwise, after the fashion of specialists, they will wear out their welcome! If any "secretary" has no report to make, he will say so to the teacher beforehand.

REPORTS

Many members of the class, who would be frightened if asked to make a speech or write an essay on any topic, will be entirely willing to investigate a subject and "report" to the class upon it. "Mrs. Jones,"

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the teacher will say, "won't you read up on Cana and report next Sunday what you find that is of interest?" And Mrs. Jones is sure to do it. "Mr. Green, won't you look up Prescott as an example of patience, and report next Sunday?" In this way you may call for "reports" on Mary Magdalene, on the single tax, on Gethsemane as pictured by the poets, on the present status of the divorce reform, on the evils of the saloon presented by the news of the coming week, on suicide statistics, on child labor. Almost any theme may be the subject of a "report." The teacher will fix definite times for these reports in his programme for the day, and will tell each "reporter" when he is to make his report.

NOTEBOOKS IN THE ADULT CLASS

Lectures and note-taking furnish the leading method of instruction in modern colleges, and there is no reason why this method should not be adapted to our adult work in the Sunday-school. We are wedded to the conversational method, which is by far the best, in college or anywhere else; but knowledge must come before conversation, and if the class does not study well, or if its studies have not given it enough knowledge for a brisk series of questions and answers, then the lecture and note-taking will come in to furnish the basis for the conversation.

The teacher will announce a lecture for a coming Sunday, giving a definite subject connected with the lessons, such as "The Explorer's Spade in Mesopotamia." He will tell the class that each member will be expected to bring a notebook and pencil and take careful notes of the lecture. He will urge the members to fix what they have heard by writing it out afterwards, and he will offer to read these notes, thus writ-

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ten out, and criticise them, if the members wish him to do so. Take pains, while the class is becoming accustomed to note-taking, to lecture very slowly, making comparatively few points.

After the method has been introduced by a few lectures, you may well extend it to the ordinary session. Tell the class that you intend to introduce into every session many facts and thoughts not contained in the ordinary lesson helps, and urge them to fix these in their minds by noting them down at once, afterwards reviewing them carefully.

A BOOK REVIEW

An occasional book review will give a pleasing variety to your sessions, introduce your members to many books they might not otherwise know about, and illuminate many matters of chief importance in the course of lessons you are studying. To avoid discursiveness the reviews should be written, and read to the class, and each should observe a strict time limit of perhaps five minutes, though books of different importance require reviews of different lengths.

Naturally you will select the most important new books, so far as these bear upon the current lessons. Now it may be the biography of some eminent Christian who illustrated the truths about which you are studying. Now it may be a book about some nation whose current history moves nearly parallel with the Hebrew history that forms the basis of the lessons. Now it may be a book treating directly the Bible book you are studying, or some prominent aspect of it.

But you will not neglect the old books, which it is usually more important for the class to know than to be informed regarding the less weighty new books. In studying any of the Gospels, for instance, you may

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have a review of the various lives of Christ, comparing them with one another. At another time you may have a review of some story based upon a portion of Christ's life, such as "Ben Hur" or "Come Forth!" At another time you may have a review of a poem connected with the central theme, such as Sir Edwin Arnold's "The Light of the World." Or again, you may have a paper comparing the standard commentaries dealing with the Gospel you are studying.

ILLUMINATING THE MISSIONARY LESSONS

Occasionally the Lesson Committee emphasizes the missionary aspects of certain lessons, and every teacher will wish to bring out those missionary lessons with especial force. This cannot be done without preparation. Look far ahead, and make your plans for the next missionary lesson at least two months in advance.

Whether it is a home-mission or a foreign-mission lesson, some fine biography makes one of the best illustrations possible. Select it, and give it to a bright member of the class for a ten-minute review.

Again, whether the theme is home or foreign, a bit of geography will be helpful. Appoint some one whose mind is inclined to such facts, and ask him to present such information concerning the people on the mission fields and the conditions in which they live as will show their need of missionary work.

Present-day happenings in the various fields will be introduced. To that end appoint several persons to read the missionary magazines during the weeks before the lesson, and bring to the class the most significant and interesting of the news items discovered. Each will take a different magazine, denominational and interdenominational.

Pictures and maps will not be neglected. Appoint a

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member of the class to give a map talk, and another to gather a little collection of meaningful pictures from mission fields, presenting each to the class with a few words.

Your own denominational work should receive attention in every missionary lesson, and one of the class should be appointed to learn what are the most encouraging pieces of recent news from your own fields, and what are the needs and enterprises that the denominational leaders are seeking to bring before the churches.

Of course all this is in addition to the regular Bible lesson, and merely in illustration of it. It will not be found, however, at all malapropos, but it will be a constant surprise to see how closely these modern events run parallel to the happenings of Bible times.

LESSON SUMMARIES

While there is seldom an International lesson that may not be studied with profit by an adult class, occasionally there is a lesson that is so familiar that the immediate text may be passed over rapidly, the class spending most of the time on the modern applications that are less familiar from childhood studies. In that case one of the members of the class may be detailed in advance to prepare a paper or a talk that will give, in no more than ten minutes, a summary of the immediate lesson. Tell him to put into it all the freshness he can, but to leave out the modern applications. After he is through, you will introduce the topics that relate the lesson to the present times.

A different kind of summary is useful in connection with a novel lesson that has required the fullest consideration of the text. In that case it is helpful to appoint one of the class to listen carefully to the discussions, and at the close of the hour bring the whole

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to a businesslike conclusion by a rapid and brisk summary about five minutes long. The speaker, of course, must be some one of a ready mind and speech.

BIBLE STORIES

Teachers of adult classes will be eager to take advantage of whatever literary talent the members of the class may possess, and cultivate it and utilize it. One way is by getting persons that can write well to prepare occasional stories based on the Bible text under consideration, bringing in the events and the characters in the course of a narrative in which their imagination has full play. This work is by no means merely for primary classes, but is befitting the dignity of the most serious of adults. As to the value of it, when well done, you have only to remember such stories as "Ben Hur," "The Master of the Magicians," and "The Prince of the House of David," and such short stories as Hale's "Hands Off!" Of course undue liberties will not be taken with the Bible, but the stories may easily be so told as to deepen reverence for it.

Seek out those in the class that possess literary tastes and abilities, and persuade them to make attempts at such stories. Assign an occasional lesson for this, and let them take their choice. There is hardly a lesson but furnishes opportunity for such illumination. Fifteen or twenty minutes will suffice for the reading of an effective story, and the writers should be instructed not to transgress that limit.

ESSAYS IN THE ADULT CLASS

You will find that many members of your class, especially those of a retiring disposition, will be able and glad to contribute an occasional essay to the class discussions, while they will not speak impromptu or

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even answer questions. It is well to try all the members in turn at this exercise, in order to bring out unsuspected talents; and the teacher himself may well write an essay once in a while and read it to the class, especially at the opening or closing of the session, when he wishes to emphasize some thought or incident.

One essay is enough for a session, if it is a five-minute essay; and nothing longer than that should be permitted. If you call for essays much shorter, say two minutes long, you may have several of them. Insist that the writers must time themselves, and not exceed the required limits. Give themes that can be fairly well treated in this brief time. For instance, if it is an Easter lesson, "Women and the Resurrection." If it is Elijah's ascension, "Chariots in Bible Symbolism." Such essays, interspersed in a session, give a pleasing variety, and a sense of substance and solidity that is well worth while.

AN OCCASIONAL TALK

More of the class will be able and willing to write and read essays, probably, than will be willing and able to give brisk little formal talks on assigned subjects; but these do so much to brighten up a session that an earnest effort should be made to obtain them, —perhaps one for every session. Five minutes is the outside limit of length, and if you have more than one talk, they must each be shorter than five minutes. Hold the speakers strictly to the time fixed, cutting them short, if necessary, in some jolly way.

Urge that only the briefest of notes shall be used, but that, in the interest of brevity, the most careful preparation shall be made, and especially that the talk shall be actually given by oneself, in private, till it is sufficiently condensed. Insist on the value of the

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exercise as a means of self-development and as an aid to the session.

Themes will be selected that are appropriate to talks rather than to essays, such as, for the lesson on Elijah at Mount Carmel, "Baalites of Today"; or on the Shunammite, "The Ministry of Healing in the Present-Day Church."

MEMORY VERSES

Elders need memory work as much as children, and will enjoy it far more and get more good from it—or quite as much. There are several ways of cultivating the memory in connection with the class work. You may ask that each member of the class commit to memory one or more Bible verses illustrating the next lesson. You may call upon the members to form "Bible chains" on the principal subject of the next lesson,—series of verses on temptation, for instance, so linked together by each person for himself that he can easily remember them. These will be useful in the individual life. You may at another time ask that each member commit to memory some appropriate quotation from a secular writer and repeat it in the class session. You may give one of the class to recite from memory some beautiful poem illustrating the lesson. These assignments will of course be made in advance, and you will be sure to introduce them into the class session. Indeed, you will take occasion to review them afterwards, saying, for example, "Mrs. Brown, that thought from Tennyson which you gave us a few weeks ago fits in here also; won't you please repeat it?"

WRITTEN TESTS

There is only one way for teachers to learn whether they are teaching anything, and that is by means of

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written examinations. All other ways are illusory and doubtful.

To introduce this method the teacher will need to make a strong appeal. Let him urge the need of thoroughgoing study, and the value of examinations to test the work. Let him ask the members to set this example before the younger classes and the other teachers, that they also may be willing to do the honest studying that can stand the test. Enter upon the plan even if only part of the class will attempt it at first.

Ten questions a day will suffice, and they should be questions on the lesson of the preceding Sunday. They should, however, often include questions on points still further back. So frame the questions that they can be answered in a single word, or at the most in very few words. Take pains to make every question crystal-clear in meaning. The questions should be as comprehensive as possible, and should call for facts and not opinions.

Dictate the questions to the class, pausing long enough for the slowest to write their answers without getting nervous. They will be slow at first, but will increase their speed. Grade the papers and return them the next week with comments. Announce the average grade from week to week. The review day may be wholly given up to an examination.

Their lack of definite knowledge will come as a surprise at first to the members of the class, as well as to the teacher. If, however, the work is entered upon in a jolly mood, and if it is made very easy at the start, it will be thoroughly enjoyed. It should not take more than ten minutes, and it will give more inspiration for real study than anything else you could possibly do.

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THE BIBLE IN THE CLASS

No class can do good work unless all the members have Bibles, and "looking on together" is only a little better than having no Bibles at all. The members may be asked to bring, each one of them, a Bible from home that can be kept in the classroom. The class should buy enough extra Bibles for visitors. It is better for the class to purchase a supply for all, so that the books may be of the same version. Buying in quantity, you can get them very cheaply.

You will, of course, get the English or American revision. If the class cannot accustom itself to the paragraph divisions editions are published which retain the division into verses. This method of printing, however, greatly interrupts the continuity of the thought. If possible, get an edition with maps.

In addition, see that many versions are brought to the recitation. Some one will have the Modern Reader's Bible, or the Twentieth Century New Testament, or Fenton's translation. Another will bring the original Greek or Hebrew, or Luther's German. As many as possible will have the Parallel Bible, the old version and the new version in parallel columns.

Since many will not care to carry their Bibles to the school, or will forget them often, it will much facilitate the use of Bibles if the class provides a locker where personal Bibles may be safely stored between sessions. Here also may be kept apparatus for the Bible-marking that the class will be urged to do. Interleaved Bibles are a luxury that will be almost indispensable if you want to get the most from the class discussions, storing away the facts and thoughts that are so freely brought out. Your copy of the Bible should be vastly enriched by these Sunday-school hours.

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Having the Bibles, use them thoroughly. You will be enabled to take up the entire section, and not merely the portion of it printed in the quarterlies. You will have many side references and illustrative readings. You will often call upon the class to read passages in concert, and the Bible conversations will be read as conversations, the various characters being portioned out among the members of the class. In short, the presence of the Bibles will enable you to make it a Bible class, and not a mere course of lectures.

CHARTS IN THE ADULT CLASS

Few teachers make sufficient use of home-made charts. Many if not all lessons may easily be put in chart form, and thus be both taught and remembered with far less difficulty. A chart before the class will hold its attention better, and the teacher has in it a programme that is conducive to orderly progress.

For making a chart you may use the ordinary large sheets of manilla paper to be obtained at any shop for a few cents. The lettering must be large enough to be read without difficulty across the classroom. Use the blackest ink you can find, and shading pens of different sizes. Red ink will also be used for setting out the divisions, together with pencils of different colors. The teacher, if entirely unable to letter well, may get a member of the class to do the work for him.

If nothing can be placed on the chart but a series of questions or topics bearing on the lesson, that is far better than no chart at all; but usually some diagram may be devised, some graphic arrangement that will help the students to fix the lesson in memory, and stimulate them to take part in the discussions.

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COURSES OF STUDY

Adult Bible classes now find themselves confronted with a pleasing variety of courses of study from which to choose. The number of these courses, and their excellence, and the high scholarship lavished upon them, are evidences of the progress of the Sunday-school in these days, and especially of the adult department.

Some of these courses are of private origin, and others are supplied by the denominational publishing houses, using the subjects provided by the International Lesson Committee. They are most useful in large schools, and in those that are graded.

Adult classes in ungraded schools, especially those using uniform lessons throughout, may wish to maintain this uniformity, and yet find that many of the lessons taken up by the main school are too familiar or easy and in other ways not fitted to the use of adult classes. In such a case it has been found quite feasible for adult classes to keep in the main to the uniform lessons, while substituting now and then a more advanced lesson from the same book of the Bible or a cognate book. Occasionally, too, the more familiar lessons may be grouped and taken on a single Sunday, the Sundays left vacant being filled with extra lessons from the same or cognate books on themes less often treated in the Sunday-school.

Such modifications of the uniform lessons in the interest of adult classes require that the teachers making the changes shall be good at preparing courses of study, and expert at making selections of Scripture and choosing appropriate and interesting themes for study. Some day the International Lesson Committee

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may think it wise to propose such modifications themselves.

Where uniformity, or approximate uniformity, throughout the school is not held to be essential, the teacher and his class have a pleasant task in choosing their course of study. Regard should be had to the character and ability of the class, and to the work its members have previously been doing. Courses will be most helpful that are closely consecutive, not skipping too often from one Testament to the other, and from one period of history to a period quite remote. The best results will be obtained if the class is kept from following impulse and whim, and is held year after year to a steady course, well outlined and thoroughly understood from the start.

The wise teacher will not impose a course upon his class. He will present the matter in all its bearings to a representative committee of the class, giving his reasons for his own preference, and arguing the case thoroughly, but allowing the committee, after careful thought and full investigation of the text-books, to make its report to the class for their adoption or rejection. Even the best course will produce very inferior results if the members of the class do not enter upon it with enthusiasm.

TIME FOR DISCUSSION

Often, strange to say, too much is prepared for the adult class, either by the teacher, or by the student, in case special work is assigned to members of the class. This is not saying, be it observed, that there is too careful preparation, but merely that too much is expected of the hour. The teacher has a feeling of hurry and not of leisure. When he gets through he is disappointed, so much that he has meant to say remains

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unsaid. The members have had little opportunity to take part, and they have not been developed. The "recitation" has become a lecture, entertaining but not educative.

On the contrary, one of the chief aims of the adult-class teacher should be to stimulate discussion. Especially for the purpose of arousing discussion he should plan certain questions and topics. He should have a schedule of the class session with the places marked where these discussion-prompting matters should be introduced, at such points as to keep the session lively and well balanced between the teacher and the class.

It is even advisable often to appoint some member of the class to conduct a discussion on a certain matter, the theme being one in regard to which the class will be sure to have a diversity of opinions. This discussion-leader will be introduced by the teacher quietly, and will be strictly informed beforehand that he is not to make a speech but to conduct a conversation. And the more of such work is done, the better able will the class become to do it well.

THE USE OF PICTURES

It is a great mistake to confine the use of pictures to the younger classes in the Sunday-school. The oldest members in the school enjoy and need this mode of information and stimulus as much as their juniors. Photographs and drawings of real scenes and reproductions of fine imaginative representations of Bible events and persons are thoroughly helpful in the adult class. Difficulty will often arise from the large size of the class and the small size of the pictures. Some adult classes have stereopticons and exhibit slides during or after the session or at the class socials. I have heard of no class that uses the reflectoscope, but

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a powerful instrument of this kind (not a cheap one) is capable of doing capital work, and shows on the screen any picture without the necessity of making a slide from it.

If it is a drawing, you may have an artist in the class who will be glad to make an enlarged copy of it. Often it will be sufficient merely to hold up the picture, turning it toward different parts of the room. The pictures may be passed from hand to hand, but that takes time, and distracts from the lesson.

As to the material, the Pilgrim Press has an admirable series of pictures illustrating the International lessons, and so have other firms if you wish to add to the collection. Many books on Palestine and the Bible are finely illustrated,—such books as Hurl's "The Bible Beautiful," Farrar's "Christ in Art," Barton's "Jesus of Nazareth," "Ian Maclaren's" "The Life of the Master," and the Bida, Doré, and Tissot series. The photographs made by travellers may be accessible, and the class may make a collection of these as well as of the half-tone prints and the books.

SOME ONE YOU DON'T AGREE WITH

The class sessions will be much enlivened if the teacher makes it a point occasionally to obtain for a brief talk before the class some one whose views are quite opposite to those of the class on some important matter. For example, he may not believe in foreign missions, and you give him a chance, when the lesson introduces the topic, to air his opinions. Or, the lesson may describe a miracle, and you introduce some one that does not believe in the possibility of miracles. The speaker will come with the distinct understanding that what he says is to be controverted, and you will have the strongest speakers and thinkers of the class

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ready to reply forcibly. The plan, of course, would not be wise for a weak or immature class; but under the conditions named it ought to result in the strengthening of faith, and perhaps in the change of view of the disbeliever. The members of the class have to meet these objections outside the class and one to one. Why not meet them in the class, upheld by the other members?

A CLASS GEOGRAPHER

One of the regular officers in an adult class may well be a Geographer, or you may call him a Traveller. He should hold office for a quarter at least. It will be his duty to draw, or get drawn, the maps illustrating the lessons, and explain them. These maps are best when they are home-made and are mere outlines, with nothing to distract the attention from the salient facts. Such maps may be marked freely, seals fastened to them, pins stuck into them, and other liberties taken with them such as would not be taken with expensive affairs. Use a blackboard, if you have one; otherwise, and often better, large sheets of manilla paper. The Geographer will indicate the presence of a certain character at different places by seals of the same color. Or, he will trace the progress of a character over the map by sticking in pins at the various points touched and uniting them by a red cord. He will speak of the interesting points in the physical geography of the country under discussion. He will read extracts from modern books of travel, and, of course, whenever it is possible to obtain a word from an actual traveller he will do so. The teacher will arrange with the Geographer in advance as to the ground he is to cover and the exact time he is to occupy.

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A CONVERSATION

An ideal lesson hour is a conversation, and in order to get this ideal before the class it is well now and then to make special preparation for a conversation and definitely announce it. The topic should be clear-cut and one that will prove suggestive to all. For example, you may propose the question, "Is the Golden Rule practicable in modern business life?" Appoint a leader for the conversation, and three or more that are to follow his lead and engage him and one another in a brisk dialogue. Urge the other members of the class to "chip in" and keep it going, and set a good example yourself. You will find it difficult to stop the conversation when the proper time arrives!

AN OCCASIONAL LECTURE

It must not be forgotten that probably all the members of adult classes have gone over the lessons many times. They hardly need the detailed, verse-by-verse study of them, but broad views, rather, and deep views, and new views. It is not wise to hold them strictly to the exact lessons, but it is well to interject a lecture now and then, the entire hour being spent in the consideration of some topic of special interest connected with the lessons. These lectures should be planned for months in advance, and the members of the class should be used as far as they will consent.

TEMPERANCE LESSONS IN THE ADULT CLASS

Adult classes are likely to skip the temperance lessons or be restless in them; but really no lessons for the year are more suited to adult classes. Of course the teacher will consider temperance in its widest aspects.

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He will widen out the theme to take in all the allied reforms. He will bring out the connection of intemperance with municipal misrule, with the abuse of the ballot, with the difficulties of public revenue, with the increase of criminals, suicides, paupers, and the insane. He will follow its ramifications into the city governments, the State and national legislatures and those of other countries. He will consider its physiological aspects, its legal aspects, its administrative aspects. He will lead the class in studying the temperance societies, the history of the temperance movement, the many-sided phases of the present-day reform. He will appoint reporters for the different countries and the different sections of our own country. He will introduce debates, symposia, essays, talks by specialists of many different sorts. And this matter is so large and vital that if the teacher is wide-awake, and makes use of only a part of the devices and opportunities open to him, his temperance lessons will thrill with contemporary interest, and will be the star lessons of each quarter.

A SYLLABUS

In teaching an adult class it is advantageous to place a syllabus before them. As few classes can afford to have the syllabus printed, the teacher may use instead a large sheet of manilla paper, on which he has printed or written his synopsis, using crayon or wielding a broad marking-pen. This is really better than a printed slip, because it holds the eyes of the class in the direction of the teacher. The syllabus will include all the points he intends to cover, arranged neatly and logically, like a table of contents, somewhat thus:

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Hebrews: The author.
The date.
To whom written.
Its purpose.
Main divisions.
etc.

Such a schedule has many advantages. It helps to fix knowledge. It keeps teacher and class from wandering. It gives a realization of progress. When it is completed, there is a sense of achievement. The plan requires considerable preliminary work, but it pays.

STUDENT TEACHERS

Even in a class of young people the wise teacher will sometimes descend from the rostrum and place some pupil upon it, persuading him to come prepared to ask questions upon the lesson. This plan is doubly valuable in adult classes. The member of the class who takes the teacher's place for the day makes a careful preparation that shows him how much more he may get from all the lessons by more earnest study. He cannot teach for a Sunday without having a fellow feeling for the teacher that he did not have before. The class will give more eager attention under the novel circumstances. And it is no slight consideration that the teacher, though he will be present and will take part, will be freed from responsibility, and will have one Sunday's glorious rest!

SPECIAL FEATURES

The skillful teacher of an adult class will recognize the value of special features, additional to his teaching, however popular that may be, for the purpose of maintaining interest in his class. He will look far

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ahead and lay out a programme of these special features, perhaps for an entire quarter. Now it may be a discussion between two members of the class; now, a lecture on Jerusalem, by some traveller; now, a debate on the authorship of Hebrews or the Fourth Gospel; now, a question-box or an answer-box; now, a series of essays on the characters of the apostles. Such special features may be used in many ways to advertise the class. They may be announced in the church calendar, or from the pulpit. They may be listed in neat cards of invitation, sent broadcast through the mail, or handed personally to those whom you wish to interest in the class, or distributed in the pews of the church. They will give the class work a welcome variety and a brisk sense of enterprise that are well worth while.

A QUESTION-BOX

Subjects of special difficulty often come up in adult classes, such as miracles, the Trinity, practical methods of temperance reform. A question-box is likely to afford a good way of treating these problems. The plan should be explained carefully in advance, and the teacher should see some of the class and specially request contributions of questions. He himself should provide a goodly number as well. The question-box may be opened by the teacher or the pastor or some wise member of the class, but whoever opens it should not answer all the questions himself, but occasionally refer some of the questions to the class for discussion. The plan is a good one because it leads to a study of the lesson in advance, and the opening of the box may well occupy a large part of the lesson hour.

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ORIGINAL POEMS

Our inspiring courses in English composition and literature, together with the universal reading of periodicals, have produced in this country an enormous number of verse-writers. It is not often that the product of their pens is genuine poetry, but very often it is melodious, pleasing, and helpful. If there is in your community such a versifier, why not use him (or her) occasionally to add to the interest of the adult class? When the subject suggests poetical treatment, ask your poet to furnish a poem on the theme, and read it to the class. If the poet is liable to be long-winded, clearly state that you will have time for only a few stanzas. Announce the feature in advance, and introduce the writer with as large a flourish of trumpets as honesty permits. I am taking it for granted that the poet will accept the invitation!

V

THE OFFICERS OF THE CLASS

A MODERN organized adult class is an affair of considerable size and complexity, far too much for one busy man to carry on. The officers of the class are to relieve the teacher of much of the conduct of the class. They do not hold merely complimentary positions. Therefore they should be chosen with great care, and the posts should be accepted with genuine consecration; they afford chances to serve the Master second only to those of the teacher himself.

The teacher should always be a member of the committee for the nomination of these officers, since so much of the success of his work depends upon them. Also some of the best members of the class should be placed upon this nominating committee, preferably the former officeholders who will not serve again. Many an adult class with poor officers deserves no better: it did not work hard enough to get good ones.

The principal officer, of course, is the class president. His chief qualification is the faculty of keeping others at work, and therefore he must have organizing power, energy, and tact: organizing power to plan the work, energy to push it, and tact to perpetuate it. If he has these three he will be a fine success.

The ideal president will know about adult classes and be an enthusiast for them. He will study periodicals. He will visit other adult classes and get points from them. He will correspond with still others that may not be easily reached by a personal visit. He will sparkle with new ideas regarding the work. He will

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not wait to be prodded or pushed ahead, but he will be proud of his class, and will not be satisfied till it is the best that is possible.

The ideal president will take an active interest in all committee work. He will be present often at the committee meetings. He will consult the chairmen and give them suggestions. He will hold regular meetings of the executive committee, consisting of all the officers and chairmen, and he will not be content until at least one bright, new plan for each committee has been adopted. If the committee chairmen do not suggest these plans he will be ready to. And then he will nudge the committees, if necessary, till the plans are carried out. His business is to prevent the frequent slip between the cup of committee planning and the lip of full achievement.

The president will lead in the secular interests of the class as the teacher in the spiritual interests. If money is to be raised, books are to be obtained, some charitable enterprise is to be inaugurated, a social or a public meeting is to be held, he will go ahead and see it through. Of course he will consult the teacher in all important matters, but his office is created to relieve the teacher of all details of which he can be relieved. He is sure to have enough left!

The president will step to the front at the opening of each class session and conduct the business that must be conducted. He will not magnify his office unduly, or take too much time with this opening business, but he will be brisk and brief. It may be necessary to make an appropriation of money, to vote in a new member, to welcome a stranger, to announce a class social, to appoint a delegate—whatever it is, the president will try to make it a helpful introduction to the work of the teacher.

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Throughout the session also the president may well take the lead in the class response to the teacher. If the answer to some question lags, he will take it up. If the lesson drags, he will interpose some brisk question or shrewd remark. Sometimes he will call out another member for his opinion. He will do his best to help out the teacher as he helps out every one else.

The president of an adult class should, if possible, be a good speaker, since he is the class representative before the public; but in any event he must be personally popular and an inspiring leader, because he is the one that should put through all class enterprises that do not immediately concern the teaching. A wise teacher will welcome such a colleague, and rejoice in this doubling of his force. If few persons in the class will make good presidents, keep each in the office for a long time. The class president will aid the teacher in speaking for the class and advocating its interests in the church business meetings, prayer meetings, and other church gatherings. He will help the teacher and the social committee in the welcoming of strangers. Having the highest interests of the class ever at heart, he will be the teacher's right-hand man, and the two should work together in the closest comradeship.

THE VICE PRESIDENT

In too many classes the vice president is a nonentity. This should not be. The vice president of an adult class should be one who will not only take the president's place in his absence, but aid him when he is present. The president, if he is wise, will give the vice president some regular part of the work, such as the oversight of certain committees; and indeed he may be made by the constitution the *ex-officio* chairman of one of the important committees, such as the

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membership committee or the social committee. The president will have the vice president preside now and then at a business meeting of the class or a meeting of the executive committee, even when the president is present. He will have the vice president in training to be the next president, if the class wants him for that office; and thus the ideal president will make the ideal vice president.

THE SECRETARY

The secretary of an adult class will do more than keep the minutes of the business transacted, making them bright and pointed. He will carry on correspondence with other adult classes, seeking for methods that can be transplanted into his own class. He will report the work of the class to the church paper and the town paper, if no committee does this. He will notify members of their election to office and of work that has been assigned them to do. Especially, he will aid the teacher by notifying the members of the class when the teacher makes assignments of tasks in connection with coming lessons. This will not be a small job, and in it the secretary will be of the greatest help to the teacher.

The secretary should do the work of the class historian, described below, if you have not such an officer. The secretary will also keep a list of the members and their addresses, and he will post the list in the classroom, giving a duplicate to each member. He will help the class greatly if he runs a class paper on a manifolding machine. This paper will contain all sorts of personal items calculated to advance the interests of the class, notes of the class progress and the work it is doing, and general bits of information and inspiration. He will attend to the printing of the class constitution and

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will see that every member has a copy of it. He will write kindly letters of greeting to new members, letters of friendly sympathy to the sick and the bereaved, letters to the absent members. In fine, the secretary may be a real assistant teacher, and with his pen he may do work of the highest spiritual value.

THE TREASURER

The ideal treasurer of an adult class not merely takes money, but goes out and gets it. It is his task to arouse and maintain the spirit of generosity. This is especially important if the class is conducting some philanthropic enterprise requiring considerable money. The class treasurer will make out a budget at the beginning of the year, stating the probable money needs of the year in detail. This list he will keep posted where the class can see it. He will report the condition of the treasury regularly, often by a bright placard. He will take up the offering, and he should do it in a cheery way that will make people glad to give. He will report, in some pleasing fashion, whether it is less or more than on the preceding Sunday. He should always know how much is in the treasury, and be ready to tell what can be appropriated if the question comes up. He will advertise the special object to which the school may be contributing, and will endeavor to bring up the class gifts to that object. The class, however, will have a separate treasury for its own purposes; and if the class undertakes any large enterprise, it may be necessary to aid the treasurer by a financial committee.

THE HISTORIAN

A class historian is as valuable in an adult Sunday-school class as in a college class, and for much the same

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reasons. The membership of the class is all the time changing, new methods are introduced, new features of the work are developed, and the changes that pass unnoticed at the time will be full of interest and instruction in after years.

The secretary of the class records the business meetings, the motions made, the officers elected, and similar routine matters; the class historian records matters that are less tangible, such as the varying spirit of the class, the workers who are prominent and their characteristics, the methods that are tried and their success or failure. He will also collect the class memorabilia, the brisk little anecdotes, the sharp sayings, the impressive utterances. He will gather up the class souvenirs, the printed material that is evolved, class photographs, samples of all that is used in the class socials, and other class gatherings.

Of course the class historian must be a good writer, the brightest writer in the class. He will be furnished with a well-bound book, and will add to it a chapter every year. This chapter will be read at the annual meeting of the class, and will furnish a striking feature for that anniversary.

These officers may make or mar the class. The best teacher can do little without their hearty aid; even a poor teacher can do much with it. Let all that hold office in an adult class (and all that read this are likely at some time to be officers) determine to put into the office their best selves, for the sake of their Lord and Master.

VI

THE COMMITTEES OF THE CLASS

PERHAPS the chief distinguishing feature of the modern type of Sunday-school adult class is its committees. The advantage of having these committees is that through them many members of the class are set to work for it. Besides, as a variety of committees are appointed, the scope of the class work is greatly enlarged. Let me describe briefly the leading committees that may be found in an ideal adult class.

The principal committee is the membership committee, whose duty it is to get new members and keep up the class attendance; but as an entire chapter in this book is given to the matter of attendance, this committee need be only mentioned here.

So also, with reference to the social committee, I need not speak of the socials of the class, since I devote a whole chapter to them; but the work of the social committee should extend much beyond the class socials, important as those are. The committee should greet all strangers and visitors, welcoming them as soon as they enter the classroom. For this purpose its members should sit near the door. They should call on strangers and aid the membership committee in interesting them in the class. The committee should take particular pains to bring out the new members to the class socials, and incorporate them in the class.

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It should call on the sick, the poor, the neglected. It should do its best to better the social atmosphere of the church and the town. If it looks upon its task in this light, no committee of the class will be more useful than the social committee.

Every adult class should have an advertising or publicity committee; nothing can well take its place, and it will contribute immensely to the success of the class. This committee will be wide-awake for all avenues of publicity. Notes about the class will be inserted in the town paper as often as possible. Something concerning the work of the class should appear in every number of the church paper. Every special feature of the class work, such as a social, an outing, a lecture, should be announced on the church bulletin board; perhaps also on the bulletin boards of the town. There will often be occasion for pulpit announcements, which the advertising committee will furnish. Sometimes posters will be printed, from type or by hand, to spread abroad a particularly attractive notice, as of a new course of study. The church prayer meeting, as well as the pulpit, affords an opportunity for announcements. Postal cards will be used to remind members of coming events in the class, or to give invitations to strangers and those not already members. New families will be visited and told about the class. Cards of invitation will be left at the hotels for the guests. When such a committee gets to work, if it has its eyes open, it will find enough work to do, and it will all pay.

Also, the advertising committee will advertise the church and its work. For this purpose it will use the town and denominational papers, handbills, posters, circular letters and many other devices. In most

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churches there is no publicity committee, and the pastor has to put his modesty in his pocket and do this greatly needed work. An adult class advertising committee, if its operations take on this wider scope, can do the work far more suitably than the pastor, and will afford him a much-appreciated relief.

The evangelistic committee of the adult class will do what it can to foster the evangelistic spirit in the class and the church. How many churches have a definite agency for this important work? The matter of observing Decision Day in the Sunday-school may well be left to this committee. It may well form a personal worker's band, made up of those that will engage with one another to do regular work with one or more persons for the sake of bringing them to the Christian decision. The work of such a group is described in the last chapter of this book.

This evangelistic committee will help the pastor in bringing others to Christ, and will aid the Sunday-school teachers in winning their pupils. It may hold neighborhood prayer meetings, and may seek to give an evangelistic bent to the church prayer meetings. It will use letters in its work, and conversations. It may well conduct a training class in methods of personal work. Nothing connected with a church is more important than just such an enterprise as this; and if the adult class can make it successful, it will have deserved well of the church.

The Sunday-evening-service committee may do a much needed work, where there is no other agency to help the minister in the difficult task of making the Sunday-evening service "go." The committee may

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provide special singing for the service, and a corps of ushers. Sometimes it will obtain special speakers. Occasionally the adult class itself will present a symposium, several of its best speakers treating some interesting topic, perhaps one connected with the current lessons. The committee may stir up the attendance in many ways, especially by vigorous advertising of the special features and of the sermon topic. Adult classes in many churches have completely rejuvenated the Sunday-evening service, and they could do it in every church.

The music committee of the adult class may furnish special music for the Sunday-evening service and for the church prayer meeting, unless the regular music committee of the church does this work, which is very unlikely. An excellent way is to get up a large chorus of young people, supplementing it with solos, duets, and quartets.

The nominating committee has in its hands, to a large extent, the fortunes of the class for the following year. As its nominations for office are made with wisdom or heedlessness, the class will succeed or measurably fail. The fault of most nominating committees is a lack of initiative. They take the easy course of renominating all the former officers, without considering how many of them have proved their fitness for the special tasks committed to them, and how many have been comparative failures there, but might shine in other positions. The committee should look over the entire class, and in making out its schedule should have regard to the development of members of the class in Christian service as well as to the development of

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the class. Other things being equal, it is always better for the class to work into office a new member than one already enthusiastic for the class and its work, and well trained in the class operations. The committee will also take pains to obtain the consent of all its nominees before presenting their names to the class; otherwise it will bring down upon its head a shower of declinations, and have its work all to do over again, with its difficulty enormously increased.

The teacher of an adult class will of course introduce many fresh methods of work; but the task of maintaining the interest of the class is so heavy that he needs the assistance of a regular "committee on new ideas." This committee, which may consist of one or more members, according to your supply of proper persons, will take periodicals that report methods of work in adult classes, and will read books dealing with the subject. They will pay occasional visits to other adult classes, carrying away their best plans. They will correspond with members of all the adult classes they can learn about, comparing methods of work. They will watch the class, and seek themselves to devise improvements upon the ways of operation in use, always remembering that a fresh face on an old method is as good as a method altogether new. They will report to the class executive committee or to the class in full session or only quietly to the teacher himself. Above all, when their new ideas have been adopted, they will do their best to make a success of them. Such a committee, working modestly and zealously, will be a great help to any teacher and any class.

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If your class, instead of having one regular teacher, has a series of teachers, an instruction committee is of special importance, taking the place of the regular teacher in binding together the instruction work of the class. But an instruction committee will greatly help any teacher. It will aid him to divide up the work of the lessons and obtain persons to take up this and that feature of the lesson discussion before the class. For example, one member of the class may agree to be responsible for presenting to the class throughout a quarter all geographical points that need elucidation. Another will agree to describe, during the same period, all peculiar customs that are mentioned in the lesson. Another will explain the difficult phrases in the lesson text. Another will make illuminating references to other parts of the Bible. Others will treat the lesson in art, the lesson in literature, the lesson in daily life, conduct the review, and so on. Others will present essays or talks on special themes suggested by each lesson.

The instruction committee will help the teacher thus to outline the presentation of each lesson, and the many minds put upon the problem will keep the class out of the ruts. Then, the committee will help the teacher get the members of the class to carry out these assignments. Three is a large enough number for the committee, and the membership should change annually to insure freshness of ideas.

The pastor would greatly value a prayer-meeting committee in the adult class, taking the church prayer meeting for its field, seeking to bring in new voices, suggesting live topics, furnishing leaders to "spell" the pastor, advertising the meeting, and themselves

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taking part in the meeting promptly, briefly, and helpfully.

The pastor's aid committee of the adult class will put itself at the pastor's disposal, to do whatever he wants done—raise money for some special object, get up some meeting, push some cause, direct letters, compile a church directory, conduct the church paper for a while, in short, be "minute men" for the overworked minister.

The adult class should have a Sunday-school committee (under whatever name), whose duty it will be to obtain substitute teachers from the adult class, which should be a great storehouse of substitute teachers for the superintendent, and a great mainstay for him in his work. I devote an entire chapter to the relation of the adult class to the rest of the school.

Every adult class should have a denominational committee, to keep the class in touch with the needs of the denomination and the current denominational interests, and to see that what the class can do toward furthering the great work of the denomination is done. This theme of the relation of the adult class to its denomination must also have a chapter to itself.

The missionary committee must also be treated by itself, and the committee that is to further the outside work, whatever it is, that the class may take up. You may have a committee to carry on a class paper. You will certainly make much of the executive committee, consisting of the officers and the chairmen of all

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the committees, meeting regularly at least once a month, and discussing all the work of the class for the purpose of taking forward steps. Indeed, you will have a committee for each new field of work as it opens up before you. Make it somebody's business, and it will get done.

Of course, it will hardly be feasible for even the largest classes to have at any one time all of the many committees that I have named. You will appoint a committee when you feel the need of the work of that special committee, and when the work is no longer needed, you will disband the committee. For, in spite of the long list of committees mentioned, I am well aware that a committee is never an end in itself.

VII

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MANY persons object to the test of members and to any stimulus toward numerical increase. "Quality before quantity" is their slogan.

But what if size is one test of quality? The big watermelon is usually the sweetest; the big rose, the most perfectly formed.

"But the most valuable goods are done up in the smallest packages," it is urged. That is true of gold and diamonds and the like, but their value is largely factitious. If there were only one bushel of corn in the world, which would be the more valuable, that bushel of corn or a bushel of diamonds?

All physiologists tell us that size is usually an accompaniment of strength and health and beauty. When Christ grew in wisdom and in favor with God and man, he grew also in stature. Thus also Christianity demonstrated its divine origin by its divine increase. If it had dwindled like the little community of Samaritans, it would have had slight claim upon the world's loyalty.

No; we all rightly feel that where there is life there will be growth, and splendid growth. This goal of numerical increase is entirely proper for our adult classes.

It must also be a constant increase. Christian growth will be steady, and not a spurt. We are to get into such a habit of growth that we cannot stop growing.

We say of a man that he "has got his growth"; but really a man never does get his growth until he

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dies. Every seven years, the physiologists tell us, he grows himself all over again!

So also a class may be said to have "got its growth" when it includes all the available men and women in the community. But even then there are new people coming into the community all the time, while the old members of the class are dying or moving away. If there is not continual increase, the class will suffer continual diminution.

It is not so easy to keep up the attendance of an adult class as that of a younger class. The adults have more distractions than the young people, and they feel more independent of the school. We cannot apply the pressure of parental authority: no one orders them to come regularly. We cannot give picture cards or buttons for regular attendance. Other motives than these must be brought into play. They are more powerful motives when aroused, but it is harder to arouse them. This is one reason why adult classes so often fluctuate greatly in attendance and membership.

This matter requires the constant attention of all workers in adult classes, and so it must have a committee devoted to it. This committee, the membership committee, must be made up of persons possessed of enterprise and social tact. If possible, it should contain members from all the principal sections of the town, so as to cover the ground geographically with ease and understanding. It must be a large committee, especially if yours is a large city class. Its members must be thoroughly acquainted with the members of the adult class and of the congregation, and must be eager to enlarge their acquaintance among those outside both. If it is an ideal membership committee, it will be enthusiastic to make its class an ideal class.

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The membership committee must have tools to work with. It must have printed copies of the class constitution, and printed matter describing the work the class is doing. If the class gets out a paper, it will carry around copies of it. If the class has had its photograph taken, that also will be at hand to help interest possible new members. The committee will keep in its pockets newspaper clippings about the class, such as descriptions of the last class supper. Above all, the committee will provide itself with some attractive printed outline of the class work, however brief—the outside enterprises it may be conducting, its socials, a sample class programme, showing how the lessons are diversified and made helpful and interesting, as by a recitation, a debate, a lecture, an essay, a reading, a symposium, or a discussion.

Then, having these printed tools, the committee will bring them to bear in personal interviews. Of course it will also use printed invitations to join the class, invitations bearing some account of the class and its work. It will send these to hotel guests and others whom it cannot well get at personally. Also it will keep a standing invitation in a frame in the post-office, and the hotels, and at the railroad station, and on the town bulletin boards. But always it will remember that the best fruit is hand-picked, and that nothing can take the place of the personal interview.

There are other ways of bringing the class to the attention of possible recruits. The committee will obtain occasional pulpit announcements of the class, for which it will furnish the material. It will now and then distribute class advertising matter through the church pews. It will make references to the class in the church prayer meetings. It will have articles and items about the class inserted in the town newspapers

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and the church paper. It will sometimes distribute handbills about the class from house to house. All of these methods will be used by this committee, in conjunction, of course, with the publicity or advertising committee if you are wise enough to have one.

But nothing is equal to buttonholing! For this purpose divide up among the committee the possible new members, so that each is given a personal invitation. If one member of the committee fails, send another. Sometimes a friend outside the committee will succeed better than anyone in the committee; send him. Set a stint, as that the committee will present to the class one new member a week. Then work like Trojans to keep up to that standard.

Get from the class the names of possible new members. Ask for these names at every meeting. Set the members of the class to giving invitations, whether they belong to the committee or not. Bring a new name before the class at the next session after it is obtained, and have the person voted in and heartily welcomed. See that he is present, if you must call for him and accompany him to the school. It will be very pleasant if the chairman of the membership committee introduced him to the class as a whole, asking him to rise. Make him feel that he has actually joined something, and that it is well worth while.

The class socials are also fine stamping ground for new members. Invite to the socials those that you want to interest in the class, and give them a good time. Call for them and bring them to some session of the class, urging them to take it "on trial."

The porch committee is an adjunct of the membership committee. Its special field is the Sunday morning congregation. The committee should be large enough to cover the auditorium conveniently, its mem-

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bers being scattered in all parts of the room, on the watch for all the strangers that may be there. These will be accosted as speedily as possible after the services are ended, and given an earnest invitation to the class. Much of this work will be done in the church vestibule, and therefore the committee is called "the porch committee." Sometimes it will be well for the committee to meet the strangers in the porch as they enter, giving them the invitation then, and repeating it at the close of the service. In any case, let the committeeman go with the stranger to the class and give him a hearty introduction. If the school does not follow the morning service, let the member of the committee that lives nearest to the stranger call and accompany him to the school. That is business!

Place in the porch or vestibule a large-type invitation to the class. Let the members of the porch committee have some printed matter about the class to give to strangers to carry home and think over, even if they do not want to attend the class on the first invitation. The members of the committee will wear badges or placards, letting the world know who they are. Make frequent reports of this work to the class and stir up the entire membership to aid the porch committee in their work.

The membership committee should keep the names of all new members before the class, with their addresses, plainly printed and posted in a conspicuous place, as a reminder that the class is expected to call on them and welcome them in person. The membership committee will complete its task by seeing that the new members actually come to the class as soon as they are voted in, and that the social committee has them well in hand, to incorporate them in the class fellowship.

Your committee will make much of the beginning of a

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new course of study, as a year in John or Matthew or the history of the divided kingdom. It will get out circulars describing the advantages of united study of such an inspiring theme; or, if the publicity committee prepares such a circular, the membership committee will use it to the full.

All advertising and promotion require something definite and interesting to promote. The membership committee may well go to the teacher and ask him for some novel plan that it may announce and use as a drawing card. It may be a debate on the question of one or two Isaiahs. It may be a lecture on the way in which excavations have confirmed the Bible. It may be a symposium by three well-known business men on the present-day lessons of the book of Jonah. Much may be made of such features in all the fashions of advertising that I have mentioned.

In conducting a campaign for new members it is well at the outset to fix upon a definite goal, as that you will add fifty new members, or add fifty per cent. to the class membership.

The members of the class will go forth two by two, in apostolic fashion, making their calls and seeking for recruits together. Each pair of workers will have a definite list of names to work upon; and if one pair fails with any man, the name may be handed over to another pair of canvassers for further effort. The canvassers will meet at least once a week to compare results and consult together.

In this campaign you will make full use of printed matter—invitation cards, a class history, the class constitution, some illustrated account of the class and its work.

Class socials furnish fine opportunities for ingather-

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ing, and they should be held as often as possible during the campaign.

You will not wait for those whom you invite to come of themselves to the class, but you will call for them at their homes on Sunday, and yourself go with them to the school. When they reach the class, introduce them to as many as possible, and try in every way to incorporate them, to make them feel at home.

Keep before the class by weekly reports the exact progress of the campaign. One way is by setting before them a large placard upon which a thermometer scale has been printed, each degree representing one pupil of the desired number. A black tape pulled up along the center of the painted tube will represent the rising mercury.

Perhaps the temper of the class will best be met by a "whirlwind campaign," the entire plan being entered upon with the resolution to carry it out inside a single week, the members agreeing to give up to the work every evening of the week, and arranging to cover the whole ground in that time.

In all the undertaking you will, of course, keep the highest purpose in view—not the aggrandizement of the class, but the reaching of more men with the gospel, the lifting of more lives. The evangelistic motive vivifies all that it touches, enriches while it purifies, strengthens while it exalts.

And the results of the effort, and of the class enlargement that it will surely bring, are many. New enthusiasm will come with the crowding new faces and the welcome new voices. You will have new force for new undertakings. The accomplishment of this task will give you a realization of your ability to accomplish new tasks, to go on toward the other goals set before you for this year. Best of all there will be the new souls

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that may be brought, by their association with the class, into Christ's kingdom of peace and love and service. Will not all this be well worth while?

Of course, your class may be too large already for the room it occupies. In that case, a larger room may be found, or the class may divide into two classes profitably. It is possible, also, that an enlargement of the class would render conversational discussion difficult, and for this reason also a division of the class would be advisable. The division might be by age; or, the married men and the single men might go into separate camps; or, the natural preference for one or the other of the two teachers might decide the matter. In case of such a division there may still be one class organization, and the two divisions may often meet together, for business meetings, socials, or to listen to a lecture. The two teachers will aid each other greatly, and the natural rivalry of the two divisions will stimulate the class.

It is quite as important to keep the new members as to get them, and this also is the work, in part, of the membership committee. Of course nearly everything depends upon the maintenance of the interest of the class, but the membership committee will help by learning the meaning of all absences, and trying to remedy any defects that these absences may disclose. In one case there may be a tiff to be smoothed over. In another case there may be a feeling of neglect to be overcome. The committee may need to suggest that this and that member be given more work to do in the recitations, or put into office, or brought out at the socials.

An important part of the duty of the membership committee is to make a brief, bright report of the attendance at the close of each session. It is best to make

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this report on the blackboard, perhaps thus: "57 here today; might as well have been 87." Or thus: "30 out today; make it 40 next Sunday." Or thus: "Hurrah! 49 present! Our high-water mark."

Regular work for each member is the best security for regular attendance. Get the teacher to give it, as far as is possible. Ask him to assign definite parts in the recitations to as many as he can work in, suiting the parts to their capacities, to one a reading, to another a question to answer, to another a three-minutes talk, and so on. The burden placed upon each will not be heavy, but a brilliant flood of light will be poured upon the lesson, and the members of the class will feel that they are all needed. And any one will come much more faithfully to give than to get: witness the regular attendance of the teacher!

VIII

THE SOCIAL WORK OF THE CLASS

AT THE outset of this chapter I want to say with much emphasis that the adult Bible class is not primarily a social organization with Bible study as an annex. But if the Bible is emphasized, and if Bible knowledge and practice are really the main objects of the class, then socials may be made a most useful adjunct. They cause many to become interested in the class that would not otherwise be interested, and they hold the class together by many pleasant bonds. Only let me urge that those drawn in to the socials shall not stop in the socials, but shall be carried along into the class work; and that the class interest in the socials shall not be allowed to overshadow its interest in the Bible.

The need for adult class socials depends on the social life of the church and the community. If your church holds monthly socials, there is no need of monthly class socials. If successful, they would detract from the church socials, and would accomplish little additional good. But if the social life of the church and the community is at a low ebb, if cliques flourish and there is no broad Christian fellowship, then the adult class certainly has a mission here. Its democratic basis, its thorough committee organization, and its practical fellowship make it an excellent agent for social improvement.

Also, even if the social life of the church and community is what it should be, there is need for at least occasional adult class socials, especially if the class is

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a large one. The new members need to be incorporated in the class fellowship. A class spirit is to be aroused and maintained. While a class conducted as I have suggested in this book would bring many before the class in the Sunday exercises, and thus would make them well known, yet there are many less experienced members, retiring and bashful, who will not be thus introduced to the class, and who are liable to slip into the background and finally out of sight altogether. The social will be a blessing to them if it is wisely conducted.

Let the socials be held regularly—monthly, or bi-monthly, or quarterly. Announce them long in advance and as publicly as you can, so that the class may hold those dates in reserve, and other organizations may respect the reservation. It is an advantage if you meet always at the same place, especially if the teacher's house is large enough for the gathering; you are more likely to remember the social and maintain a continuity of interest in it. But there are many advantages also in meeting from house to house. It is the best way of becoming acquainted with all the members of the class and of making all feel that they are really honored parts of the class. Only, if you do this, you must insist strictly upon the simplest forms of entertainment, and you must go to the poorest dwelling as heartily and as much as a matter of course as you go to the wealthiest. This will cultivate a genuine democratic spirit, which is so valuable a gain for a wisely managed adult Bible class.

I know of no better entertainment for an adult class social than a plan I tried once with a class of young men. The idea was to spend an evening with each member of the class, who would tell us about his business, whatever it might be. Those evenings were full

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of interest. I remember that one young fellow, a brakeman, told us a lot about railroading. Another, who was clerk in a fish store, gave us much information about fish. Another, who was runner for a shoe factory, brought in samples of shoes in different stages of the process of manufacture, and explained that wonderful process to us. One was a banker, one a teacher, one an editor. Perhaps the most entertaining evening of all—unexpectedly so—was that which we spent with a clerk in a men's furnishing store. None of us knew before how many interesting facts are to be related from such a store. Indeed, the callings lowest in the scale of popular esteem uniformly gave us the most interesting evenings. Questions were in order all through these little talks. At the close we had nuts and apples or cake and lemonade—even ice cream was ruled out as being likely to be too expensive for some; then we had a "sing," and then we went home. This plan of a social could be carried out even better in an adult class than in my class of young men, because the members are older and have more experience to draw from.

But there are many other plans that will furnish good socials for adult classes. On one occasion make each member of the class responsible for the entertainment of the company for, say, five minutes. One may lead a game; another may sing a song; another may tell a funny story, or give a reading. A State or city social is pleasant, each member coming with something connected with the State or city—some characteristic product that he will tell about, some poem by a State or city poet to recite, some interesting piece of local history to relate, some local picture to show, and so on. A book social is interesting, each person wearing something that describes, usually in a

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punning way, the title of a well-known book. For instance, a placard worn around the neck, reading, "Who teaches you?" may represent "Hoosier School-master." For a baby social each must come attired in infantile costume, and children's games will be played. Very youthful photographs will be displayed on the wall,—those of the members of the class,—and they are to be identified and a list is to be made, by number, by each person present. For a poverty social each member comes dressed in as poor costume as he can find. For an experience social each member will think up some pleasing, instructive, or humorous experience of his life, and relate it to the class. The bashful may write theirs out and get friends to read them. For a game social you will arrange a number of little tables, each with a different game, to which the members are to go in turn, moving from table to table at the tap of a bell. The various members of the class will bring the games, each being asked for one. For a travelling social the members pass from house to house, being treated at each home with a different entertainment. A science social is organized along the lines of some popular branch of science, microscopic slides being exhibited, for instance, and a little talk being given on the wonders that the microscope reveals. In the same way a country social is built around some interesting country, such as Japan, each member bringing some curio from that country and telling about it.

A genuine outdoor picnic is a good plan for the social committee to carry out in summer or other propitious times of the year, but in winter indoors must serve the purpose; and for some reasons indoors is an improvement. Advertise the picnic just as if it were a summer occasion, out-of-doors. Select a large private house,

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or a large room in the church if the latter is available. Make it look woodsy with evergreens. Each member of the class will bring a basket of food, and all will be pooled for the feast. Spread table-cloths on the floor (previously laying down paper). Sit at the table-cloths on shawls and rugs also spread upon the floor.

Use the good old picnic amusements, drop the handkerchief, three deep, tag, still pond, and the like. Set members of the class to jumping rope. Let two join (under a shawl, etc.) to impersonate the picnic cow, entering to cause dismay. Let another impersonate the angry farmer, coming to order the picnickers off his premises. For the more serious entertainment get some of the older members to give reminiscences of the picnics of former days, and have a talk on the picnic principle (some contribution from each one) applied to our class work.

It is a decided help to a class to get away together on some week-day excursion. These excursions furnish opportunities for intercourse that the classroom does not afford. Character is brought out in delightful ways. The lesson for next Sunday—the lessons for many Sundays—will be the better for the experience. The outing may take the form of a trip to a near-by city, to hear some worth-while lecture, perhaps on a Scripture theme. If an Oriental museum is at hand, it will make a fine goal for another excursion. You may go together to see some spot of historical interest, or to visit an art gallery. Once start these outings, and attractive occasions will multiply.

Once a year, at any rate, an adult Bible class will find it advantageous to meet together for a supper. It may best be held in a private house, if a large enough one is available; otherwise, in the church vestry. A comfortable hotel or restaurant would be better than

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nothing. Each member of the class will pay for his own supper and also for the supper of the guests whom he invites. Seek to have many guests invited, and utilize the occasion to interest in the class as many outsiders as possible. The menu card may be printed inexpensively on a hectograph, and filled with pleasantries about the members of the class. Appoint a bright toastmaster, and put the exercises in charge of a special committee. On the conclusion of the supper a succession of the wittiest and most interesting speakers you can obtain will speak to a series of toasts, on such themes as "Our Class," "Our Teacher," "Our Church," "Our Pastor," "Our New Members," "Our Guests," "Our Past," "Our Future." After the speaking, you may have games or music, a phonographic entertainment, stereopticon pictures, or some other pleasant amusement. The membership and social committees of the class will be "on their job" all through the evening.

Not only should an adult class have occasional socials, but the teacher's own hospitality should be an example and stimulus to the class, and once in a while his house should be thrown open to the members in a formal way. It would be well to dignify the occasion by the use of printed announcements, or at least of written invitations, especially as this gives a fine opportunity to invite in a definite way the strangers whom you wish to interest in the class.

While the invitation may be for the evening only, yet it is well to have light refreshments for the sake of the fellowship brought out in eating together. It will suffice to provide nuts and apples, or cake and lemonade, or ice cream and cake, or nuts and candy.

A little formal entertainment should be provided, such as a number of selections on a good phonograph

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or by a good reciter, or some pleasant piano or violin music, or singing. An excellent plan is to place on little tables a lot of puzzles of different kinds, one for each table, and assign the persons present to these tables, having the groups move from table to table at the sound of a trumpet, and seeing which group will solve the most puzzles. Close with the singing of a hymn and with prayer. The teacher will, of course, devote himself particularly to the most bashful or the least acquainted, and seek to make them feel at home.

Adult classes always have good uses for all the money they can raise for class purposes, and an excellent way to obtain sums supplementary to the regular offerings is to give a class entertainment. The preparation of such an entertainment increases the class spirit, and the entertainment itself, if it is successful, is a splendid advertisement of the class.

A musical concert, vocal and instrumental, with readings, is easily within the range of most adult classes, especially with the aid of outside friends, and is a most suitable form of entertainment. Bible tableaux may be introduced appropriately and beautifully into any entertainment that is mainly serious. One of the class may give a bright lecture. A class debate may be made a worth-while entertainment, especially if a very popular and timely subject is selected. Mrs. Jarley's Waxworks are ever new. Many famous entertainments, such as "The Old Maids' Concert," have very likely never been given in your town, or have been given so long ago that they will bear repeating. Many a class contains some one whose original genius is equal to the making of a brand-new entertainment.

Advertise it widely as given by your Bible class. Sell tickets in advance, to guard against exigencies of the weather. Take ample time for full preparation,

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and do your best, remembering that the reputation of your class is at stake.

There is every reason why an organized Bible class should go into athletics. The proceeding will be a recognition of the fact that religion concerns itself with the body as well as with the soul. It will give the boys and girls a new respect for their elders, and will convince them that religion, even in adults, is not "sissy" or "old-fogy." It will promote the class *esprit de corps*, and it will renew the youthfulness of its members. Surely all of these are worthy aims.

If it is a mixed class, there are athletic interests for the women as well as the men, even the grandmothers as well as the grandfathers. Tennis may be made as active or as mild as you please. Basket-ball is within the range of possibilities for the ladies of the class. Croquet may be revived, or the scientific roque. For the men, baseball is the invariable stand-by, but bowling, golf, tennis, and bicycling are all good. Class "teams" should be formed, and match games may be played with other classes, and tournaments will be conducted within the class. These unusual interests will contribute unexpected light to many a class discussion, and the fresh oxygen will throw new vim into all the class endeavor.

I have spoken in another chapter about the social committee, which has these socials in charge, and of the other social work that they are to do. They will be a Columbus committee, always seeking to make discovery of talents for entertaining and for social leadership. One member of the class, they will learn, is a good singer; another can play well on the flute; another is interested in art; another has travelled and can tell about his journeys; another can give sleight-of-hand entertainments; another is a capital amateur

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photographer. Every one in the class is likely to have some fad, some special interest about which he can talk well, though he may be silent on all other subjects. The social committee will work all these in; perhaps in time they will become developed to the point of speaking in the class sessions.

Insist that in the socials all shall wear tags with their names plainly printed thereon in big letters. Do this always, even when the majority of the class know one another well, for the sake of the new members and the visitors. Make it a rule that no one is to speak at the socials to those whom he knows until he has at least spoken to all whom he does not know!

The adult class socials should be characterized supremely by the spirit of democracy. All will be equally welcome, the servant as welcome as the millionaire. They will also be characterized by their purpose, which is more than to have a good time; it is to promote a noble cause. Show this by the way you close the social,—with prayers and a hymn and the pastor's benediction. Put the Bible spirit into all of your socials, and make them lead all that attend right up into the Bible class.

IX

THE SCHOOL RELATIONS OF THE CLASS

THERE is need of a chapter in this book to discuss the relation between the adult class and the rest of the school, because here there is often considerable friction. The members of the adult class are likely to feel quite independent of the school. They are likely to look down on the rest of the school as mere children. The modern adult class is usually very large, and its numbers add to its thought of its own importance. It is restless during the general exercises of the school and is eager to close its doors at any point and begin its own exercises, which are of so much greater interest to its members. It is hard to keep the members of the adult class from talking during the general exercises, and the class sometimes breaks up before the rest of the school and makes a great deal of disturbance in the process. The adult class wants to have a treasury separate from that of the school, and it is entirely independent of the school in its choice of lesson helps. Altogether, the modern adult class is full of possibilities for trouble in connection with the general management of the school.

And yet, while it has a right to its own entity, it should be an integral part of the school. Manifest laxity allowed the adult class is injurious to the school discipline. "If the old folks can do it, why not we?" the aggrieved children ask. Sometimes the school officers can make the officers of the adult class see the difficulty here, and guard against it. At any rate,

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the adult class must be incorporated thoroughly with the rest of the school. How are we to do it? Just what should be its relations with the school? Should they be the same as those of the Primary department? Is no freedom to be granted to age and experience?

I think there should be a difference, many differences. The adult class, for instance, has a right, while contributing regularly to the school collections, to maintain also its own treasury for its separate and exceptional expenses. It needs, and has a right to, more time for the lesson than the rest of the school. If it is with the school in the opening session (in some cases this is not feasible or desirable), it should not be expected to be with the school in the closing session. If the opening exercises are prolonged beyond the usual time by a matter of interest only to the Intermediate department, the adult class should be invited to close its doors, if it wishes. The adults should not be treated in the imperative mood, as the children are. Advice should be asked from them oftener than it is given to them.

And yet the adult class, though not on the same plane with the younger pupils, has the same duties toward the school. It must contribute its share to the school collections, and quite as much to the school spirit. Its members should in most cases, at least in small schools, be present at the opening exercises of the school. It is inspiring to the boys and girls to see their elders there. The sight dignifies the school. If the adult class occupies a room quite separate from the general schoolroom, it is well worth while for the adults once or twice a year to pass in and out in order to be present at the opening exercises. I know how much the adults need all the time for the lesson; but some things are quite as important as the lesson, and

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one of these is the general welfare of the school that contains your girls and boys. Especial pains should be taken to be present when the children of the Intermediate department are giving any novel performances, such as recitations or class songs.

There is much that the adult class may do to advance the welfare of its school. The teacher and the president of the class will be members of the superintendent's cabinet, where they will learn all that the school is trying to do, and will offer the help of the class. Sometimes the help will take the form of money, and the adult class should be the great financial reservoir of the school. Sometimes the aid will be by way of influence, whenever the coöperation of the entire church is needed. Sometimes the help will be given in moral support, the advice and backing of the adult class being gained for some plan for the spiritual welfare of the boys and girls.

The greatest need of the Sunday-school, next to a profound Christian consecration, is the need of trained adult workers in all departments. This need the adult class may meet better than any other agency.

In promoting this larger efficiency of the school the first need that the adult class will discover is the lack of teachers, both substitute and permanent. In some cases the adult class draws off the supply of possible teachers, and holds them fascinated in a rather selfish enjoyment. On the other hand, adult classes introduce to the school scores that would not otherwise be there. Let us transform every adult class into a source of supply for teachers, and make them available whenever possible without hindering the vastly important work of the class.

In many, if not all, adult classes it will be feasible to form a group of those who are willing to be substitute

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teachers on demand. The assistant superintendent will receive a list of these. That the burden may rest evenly on all and that the adult class arrangements may suffer no interference, each will agree to come to the school for one month at a time—a certain month—having learned the lesson and prepared to teach it. Of course they will not be given special assignments in the adult class during that time. These possible substitutes will sit near the door in the adult class, so that the superintendent may easily call them out. As you persuade many to enter this service you will discover many good teachers whom no one had suspected. The substitutes will, many of them, be greatly liked by the classes to which they minister, and will fall in love with those groups of dear young people, so that it will not be at all difficult to draw permanent teachers from the ranks of these substitutes. All of this will be done remembering that the regular study in the adult class may be more important than any other consideration, and carefully balancing the needs of the school.

From this work will flow naturally a class in teacher-training. The adult class committee of substitutes, with all others interested, and, of course, with the regular teachers of the school, will meet outside the school sessions to study methods of teaching. Or, if it is found impracticable to meet at another hour, and if the adult class is large, a separate teacher-training class may be organized, to meet at the regular Sunday-school hour. A text-book will be selected. A leader will be chosen. This leader is not to teach the class, unless you are fortunate enough to have an expert in your number, and a willing expert at that; but in most cases the leader will be merely a good executive, who will keep the ball rolling.

Each member of the teacher-training class may

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conduct its exercises in turn. All the members will have the text-book, and will read a chapter in it before the meeting of the class. The leader for the day will ask questions on the chapter and open a discussion of it. Different persons will be appointed to give brief talks or read essays on themes connected with the subject of the chapter. Occasional talks on various phases of teaching will be obtained from public-school teachers. The class will sometimes visit the public schools together, or Sunday-school conventions. As they gain new methods and wider knowledge, the members of the class will at once put it into service in their teaching. The adult class, as part of its service, may well form such a class every year, each year with a different text-book.

The school may rightly look to the adult class for its supply of officers. The officers of the adult class—president, secretary, treasurer and committee chairmen—will prove their efficiency, and will be in training for precisely similar positions in the main school. If they succeed well in the management of the adult class, promote them to the larger work.

It will be good for the school if the superintendent brings the adults before the young people in many ways. It will show them that religion is something for men and women as well as for boys and girls. Ask some one from the adult class occasionally to lead in the opening prayer or to conduct the opening Bible reading. When some member of the adult class develops a special ability, as in regard to Bible geography or history or antiquities, have him give to the main school a series of supplementary lessons on the subject, occupying the last five minutes of the session.

In every business meeting of the adult class some time should be spent in considering the general state

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of the school, and what the class can do to help. Make the members of the class feel that as men and women, fathers and mothers, the responsibility for the school rests upon them as well as upon the superintendent.

Every adult class will therefore have a Sunday-school committee to consider its relations to the main school, and what it can do to further the school's general interests. This committee will be in touch with the superintendent, and its reports to the class will be the medium through which the superintendent asks for any help he may think the adult class can give to the school.

Sometimes the adult class may give a social to the rest of the school, or a picnic, or take the pupils to hear a famous lecturer or see an aëroplane meet or visit a museum. Sometimes it may treat the school to a piece of needed equipment, presented in the name of the class, such as a set of maps, a reference library, a blackboard, a new piano, an announcement board for posting the numbers of the hymns.

On the other hand, as the adult class grows, the school officers should show a pride in it. The treasurer will make a special announcement of its attendance. The superintendent will publicly congratulate it, and call upon the school to give it the Chautauqua salute, or to rise in greeting and bow toward it. The superintendent's cabinet should plan for it, and the officers should try in every way to further its interests. Thus the adult class and the school, working happily together, will be a powerful unit in bringing in the kingdom of our Lord.

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CLASS DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES

MANY adult classes do not meet with the Intermediate department of the school for the opening exercises, but have a room to themselves, often at some distance from the main school. Such classes should take pains that a strong, uplifting note shall be struck in their class devotional exercises; that they shall not be perfunctory, but filled with life.

It will often be best for the teacher to place these devotional exercises in charge of the class president, to recognize him, and also to set him to planning for them. Sometimes a member of the class may be appointed a committee on opening exercises.

No one person will offer the opening prayer, but different members of the class, and strangers will be drafted in. Be sure to give the person notice in advance, that he may make mental preparation. Sometimes you may call upon the class for a series of sentence prayers. Sometimes you may have the Lord's Prayer recited in concert. Sometimes a special prayer may be written, and copies of it distributed, for the class to read in concert, all heads being bowed. Sometimes a prayer hymn or a prayer Psalm may be read in concert by the class. Many other forms of opening devotional exercises will be devised, if you have some wide-awake person whose mind is on the matter.

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CLASS LETTER-HEADS

Class stationery is a distinct aid to any adult class, and it is so easily obtained that it is a shame not to use it. Many classes have printers among their members, who will be glad to do the job at cost. The business men of the class will be able to get it done inexpensively in connection with their own printing.

The paper used should be of good quality, for it will represent, in a way, the quality of the class. The design of the letter-head should be in the best of taste, for it will represent the taste of the class. All the original brightness you can get into the letter-head will add to its value for advertising purposes.

The letter-head will contain the names of the class teacher, officers, and committees, with their addresses. Some letter-heads that I have seen contain also the names of all the members of the class, and thus constitute a class directory. If you are willing to have printing on the back, much of this may be placed there, together with a full account of the class and its work. A picture of the class makes an attractive feature of a letter-head, and if you have a class photograph, an engraving of it may be obtained for about two dollars.

Besides their great advertising value, such class letter-heads serve to bind the class together, add to the class interest, and are very convenient for reference.

A CLASS RELIEF FUND

Most adult Bible classes, if not all, would find constant use for class relief funds. Such a fund would be used primarily for the members of the class and their families, though the money might occasionally be given to other needs, on vote of the committee in charge. All the work of relief will of course be done very quietly,

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and the relief committee should be made up of persons of tact, sympathy, and practical wisdom.

The money may best be raised by regular contributions for this special object, made by all the members. If every one gives something, however little, each week, not only will the small sums aid surprisingly in making the total, but the help will be received with less shrinking if one has himself been making contributions to the fund.

The money will be used to tide over all kinds of financial difficulties, when members are sick, or out of work, or there are funeral expenses to pay. A great variety of uses will be found for the fund, and it will accomplish a large amount of good.

CLASS PHOTOGRAPHS

Practically all the members of your class would value a class photograph; and as the class membership is continually changing, once a year is not too often to have one taken. These annual photographs will be preserved with the class records, and copies of them will adorn the walls of the class meeting-room.

The photographs should be inexpensive; fifty cents each should be the limit of price; and as the class is probably large, this price should be easily gained. The work, however, should be well done—no amateur job, unless the amateur is more expert than most are. If possible, avoid the flashlight, with its melancholy results. Avoid also, if possible, the commonplace arrangement in dreary rows, and group the class more naturally. This is easily accomplished if the picture is taken outdoors, as at a picnic.

The class photograph may be posted in the church vestry, and made a part of a cordial invitation of strangers to join the happy company. An engraving may

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be made of it at little cost, and this may be used in the class printed invitations and announcements.

ADULT CLASS CHEERS

Sometimes the adult classes indulge in class "yells." The barbaric word is well chosen; they certainly are not "cheers," and are anything but cheering to the thoughtful mind. For instance, this, which was used by the Delta Alpha class of a certain town:

D. A., D. A.,
So we say,
Rah, Rah, Rah,
Ma, Ma, Ma,
Caw, Caw, Caw,
Jurra, Jurra,
D. A. *Daw.*

A collection of class "yells" which I have reads like a verbatim report from the dangerous ward of an insane asylum. The absurdity of such performances is only equalled by their impiety. It would be far better for a Bible class to adopt for its vocal expression some stanza of a vigorous hymn, such as "The Son of God goes forth to war." I have written the following to illustrate my idea of what a Bible class cheer ought to be, though I know it will seem tame enough to minds of the "Sizz-Boom-Bah" order:

For the right, for the true,
To pray and to do,
For the true and the right,
To struggle and fight,
The Book for our guide,
Our stay and our pride,
All perils we pass,
The.....Bible Class!

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By omitting "The" or "Bible," almost any town name may be introduced into the last line.

CLASS WINDOW CARDS

One of the best ways to advertise an adult class is by the use of printed cards placed in shop windows. The members of the class will know many shop-keepers, and almost any shop-keeper will be glad to add to the interest of his window display by inserting these cards.

The cards should be printed on good cardboard, and as attractively as possible. Red and black make a good combination. Use a picture of the church, or of the class teacher, or of all the class. Add a statement of the class objects, but brightly and concisely. Announce any special course of study that the class may have in hand. Close with a cordial invitation to join the class, and sign the names of the teacher and all the officers and committee chairmen, to give a point of contact, and to show something of the work of the class.

A CLASS EXCHANGE

The establishment of a class exchange will cultivate the spirit of generosity in a class, and the mutual goodwill of the members. This class exchange consists of the interchange among the members of whatever reading matter connected with the lessons is found helpful. If any one, in preparing the lesson, has come across a particularly good article or a book that is especially illuminating, he will bring it to the class and take opportunity to speak about it, offering to lend it to any one who would like to read it. This will be understood to be no perfunctory offer, but one that is meant to be accepted.

The purpose of the class exchange may well be widened to include all kinds of bright books and articles

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or stories or poems in periodicals concerning which the members are enthusiastic, whether they have relation to the lesson or not. The exchange may also widen out to include mention of such reading matter by title and reference to the book, or periodical, if it is in the public library, or is likely to be accessible otherwise to members of the class.

CLASS GOALS

Many adult classes make little progress because they do not set up goals. You can always do far more if you have a goal than you can without it. Definite aims lead to definite action, you have the sense of progress, you can record results.

Some of these goals that you may set up for the class to work toward are the following: to double the membership of the class within a certain time—quite feasible for most classes; to purchase new hymn books for the church—and many churches need them sadly; to double the average Sunday evening congregation of the church by advertising the sermon topic and special singing and other features which the class will provide; to beautify the church yard; to obtain and put into operation a church library; to build for the boys and young men a church gymnasium, that will be a blessing to the whole town and a means of interesting young folks in the church; to build a new Sunday-school room; to win a higher average for the class attendance. Working for such definite results as these will increase the class spirit, and do much indirect good, in addition to the direct good that is gained.

A CLASS GLEE CLUB

A glee club in an adult class cultivates the mutual acquaintance of the members and promotes class

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spirit. It may be made large, including all in the class who can be persuaded to join, or it may be thought best to form a number of smaller clubs, vying with one another in their efforts, and uniting occasionally for special work.

The class glee club will give a concert now and then, and may raise money for class purposes. Its singing will enliven the socials of the class and the church. The club will certainly not confine itself to "glees," but will also sing sacred music, and thus may be made of the greatest service in the Sunday evening meetings of the church and in the church prayer meetings.

A TEACHING PARTNERSHIP

Often when it is impossible to get one teacher for an adult class it is quite easy to get two! What one will hesitate long before undertaking by himself, he will readily undertake if he has a partner; and I wonder that the partnership principle is so seldom applied to Sunday-school teaching. A teaching partner is helpful when one is worn out, relieving one of part of the burden. The partners may take turns in teaching. This will give each teacher a chance for an occasional visit to other schools, gaining the inspiration and instruction of other classes and different methods. Or, both teachers may teach in one session, each occupying half of the time, by careful previous arrangement dividing the subject between them.

This partnership teaching affords a great relief if one of the partners is sick, or worried, or especially busy, or is called out of town. Each teacher will supply some lack of the other. One will be good in class administration, the other in fostering the social spirit of the class. One will shine in Bible history, the other in the application of Bible truths to the present

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day. Of course each must admire the other and be quick to recognize his good qualities without envy; and, granting these conditions, a partnership teaching will be as useful as a commercial partnership ever was.

THE SHUT-INS OF THE CLASS

In large classes there are almost always some that are sick and others that are aged and likely to be kept home often by infirmities, by bad weather, and for other reasons. The class should make provision for visiting these. You may have a special "visiting committee" for the work, or make it part of the tasks of the social committee.

This committee will take the flowers that have been used to adorn the classroom, and let them bring their cheer to the sick-bed. The class may sometimes vote a special message to be carried by the committee. The committee will tell the shut-ins about the class doings, and will cheer them up in every way possible. Sometimes the members of the class may send little gifts. Sometimes they may unite in a round-robin letter. The committee will not be satisfied with its own calls, but will stir up others to call. In this way the class will insure the continued interest of the absentees, and often by this means an entire new family may be won for the school.

THE CLASS ROLL

The list of the members of the class should be kept prominently before the class, for the sake of class spirit and the cultivation of sociability. The larger the class, the more necessary is this.

The list may be kept behind glass in a large frame. Street addresses should be given with the names. The names should be in alphabetical order. They

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should be printed on separate cards, so that new names may be inserted where they belong. The lettering should be very large and plain.

As a new member joins the class, post the name and address by itself in the very front of the room where all may see it. Post beside it a standing invitation to join the class and to bring others into the membership.

Each member of the class should have a printed copy of the class roll, which should be revised at least once a year. If the class is small, these lists may be worked off on some manifold.

THE CLASS PRINTING-PRESS

Some adult classes of which I know run their own printing-presses, and find in the operation much pleasure and profit. One of the decided advantages of this course is that the class uses much more printer's ink than it would otherwise do, and that means a larger and a better class.

You will need only a fair-sized hand-press, and it is not at all necessary that it be a new one. If some practical printer is interested in the class, you can get it at less expense. Through him also you may be able to get second-hand type nearly as good as new. You should in any case get the advice of a printer concerning the kinds of type best for your purpose, and the other essentials of the outfit. Take lessons from him in the operation of the press, and submit your first jobs to him for criticism, since an amateur's first work, however crude, always looks fine to him, and the sending out of poor printing will injure the reputation of your class.

The young men of the class will gladly run the press without charge, especially if they are allowed to do a little private work upon it. They will turn out invita-

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tions to the class, class notices of all kinds, lists of members with addresses, the class constitution, the teacher's questions or synopses or assignments of work or lists of reference books. In time, they may even be enterprising enough to publish a class monthly or weekly paper, which will be a large addition to the class resources of interest and stimulus. The uses of a class printing-press are endless, if you once set it at work.

If you cannot afford (or think you cannot afford) a class printing-press, the next best resource is a hectograph (a gelatine-pad duplicator), or a mimeograph, or any other effective contrivance of the kind; but every adult class should own something whereby it can do its own printing.

LETTERS TO MEMBERS

The post-office may be made almost an assistant teacher. It works throughout the week. The appeal of a letter is direct and personal, and it is especially effective because it is unusual—at least, on Sunday-school business. The teacher may assign work through the post-office, may distribute questions for answer, may give out sub-topics for treatment, may reply to questions that arose in the class session or explain difficulties not sufficiently explained in the class, may welcome new members, make suggestions to class committees, give comfort in sorrow, offer congratulations for good fortune, in short, he may use this medium in almost endless ways for promoting the work of the class and drawing close to the hearts of the members. As the teacher uses the post-office in this way more and more uses for it will present themselves, until he becomes thereby a teacher for seven days instead of merely for one.

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THE CLASS FINANCES

It will save confusion and set the right example to the rest of the school if the adult class makes an offering each Sunday to the same object to which the other classes are contributing, keeping its own finances entirely separate. Some classes, however, prefer to make a single offering each Sunday, place it in the class treasury, and vote from that treasury, from time to time, the sums they wish to give to the purposes of the school. This plan, though less convenient for the general officers, is more convenient for the adult class, and the voting brings clearly before the class the benevolent objects of the school. If it is not adopted, extra collections may be taken for class purposes, or regular dues may be assessed.

The sum needed for class purposes will depend on how much the school allows the class from the general treasury. Keep down the class expenses so that they may not be burdensome; and, if there are poor persons in the class, it may be best to raise most of the money very quietly, by private subscription. However, the success of the class requires that there shall be a liberal use of printer's ink and a generous supply of the apparatus for teaching, such as maps, books, a blackboard, and duplicating contrivances.

A CLASS DIRECTORY

This class directory is a printed or typewritten list of all the members and officers of the class, a copy being given to each member, to the Sunday-school officers, and the pastor. Every member's name should be accompanied by the date of his admission to the class, and his street address. The directory should contain a little exhortation urging the members of the

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class to call upon one another. A short history of the class should be given, the class constitution, and all other information that the members should have readily accessible.

A CLASS BLACKBOARD

The uses of a class blackboard are numerous, and every adult class should by all means have one. On it will be placed all sorts of class notices, diagrams, tables, maps, sets of questions, outlines of the lessons; it will be used constantly when once you get it. If, having no classroom, you meet in the church auditorium, the blackboard may be of the rolling-up kind, placed on a portable standard, or of the flat kind, placed on an easel. If you have your own room, the blackboard should be fastened to the wall in front of the class, and it is best if it is made with two folds, so that it may open up like a book, thus giving additional surface that is very useful. Such a blackboard may be made by any carpenter.

MUSIC IN ADULT CLASSES

If the class meets in a room by itself, or in the main auditorium of the church, as is the case so often, special provision should be made for musical features, or this strong aid in the development of interest is likely to be overlooked altogether. Not a lesson but has some appropriate song or hymn, generally bearing very directly upon it, and the skilful presentation of this music will add much to the effectiveness of the teaching. Such songs made a fine conclusion for the lesson hour, beautifully fixing the truths that have been brought out.

You may use solos, duets, or quartets, or sometimes the entire class may sing. Often it will be more impres-

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sive if the hymn is read in concert before it is sung. If no instrument is at hand, get some one to start the songs without an instrument, or purchase a baby organ; it will prove one of the best investments the church ever made, if its possibilities are brought out in wide-awake service.

Of course, if the class meets in a place so near to the main school that loud singing would disturb its exercises, great care should be taken to sing only very softly. Under all circumstances, however, special music to some extent may be introduced into the exercises of the adult class.

CLASS POSTERS

Advertising pays. At least, the right kind of advertising pays. The adult class of my Sunday-school discovered this.

They had prepared a course of exceptional value, an original course, with a series of skilful teachers, many of them from other towns. They wanted to crowd that room, and give those teachers the largest audiences possible. Also, they wanted to make permanent additions to the class. Therefore, they advertised their wants.

Posters were printed—big-type posters, the kind that advertise auctions and travelling magicians. These were printed on heavy paper, that would stand the weather. They set forth in glowing terms the advantages of the class, detailed the coming series of lessons, named the teachers and dates, and closed with a hearty invitation signed by the class president and the membership committee—all substantial men. Then this poster was liberally tacked up over town, and as fast as the small boy pulled them down, new ones were installed.

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Paid? Well! Outside of the Black Hole of Calcutta perhaps there never was a room more closely packed! And you can do it with any quarter's course of lessons, and with only one teacher, if you have a man who knows how to write "ads."

A CLASS PAPER

I have before me a copy of *Friendly Class Chat*. It is a weekly paper published by the Friendly Class, which is the adult Bible class of the Allston, Mass., Congregational Church. It starts off with the name and address of the member of the class who is chairman of the publishing committee, and with the figures for the attendance of the class for the preceding Sunday (56), and the offerings of the class and the school. Then come directions for the study of the next lesson, chiefly in the form of questions, while the greater part of the sheet is given to bright notes about members of the class and class doings, including contributions to a missionary barrel and a class picnic. Fun and earnest are mingled in just the right proportion. The paper is first type-written, and is then run off on one of the duplicating contrivances now so cheap and effective. It consists of a single large sheet, printed on only one side.

Such an organ would be of the greatest value to a large class. It would foster class spirit. It would promote class enterprises. It would increase sociability. It would enable the teacher to place before the class many a pointed suggestion. It would reach all the members, if sent through the mail, and would spur the interest of absentees.

The teacher ought to have free access to the columns of the paper, but he ought not to be burdened with carrying it on. One member of the class might edit it,

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another print it, and a third mail or distribute it. By these labors at least three persons would be more firmly attached to the class.

CLASS NAMES

It is not easy to find a good name for an adult Bible class—a name that is not hackneyed or trivial or fanciful. Such a name is an undoubted aid to a class, and may become a genuine inspiration. There is nothing particularly attractive in the name “Adult Class,” or “Class No. 1,” while the title, “Bible Class,” so largely given to adult classes, makes the unkind implication that the other classes of the school are *not* Bible classes.

“Friendly Class” is an excellent name, and one that has been adopted by a number of classes quite different in make-up and methods. It is a fine name to have to live up to! “The Progressive Class” would be a good name. So would “The Symposium Class,” “The Research Class,” “The Bible Fellowship,” “The Scripture Guild.” The history of the class may suggest a name, such as “The Milburn Class,” in honor of a revered former teacher, the founder of the class. The class may be named in memory of some famous Bible scholar who is a favorite with the members: “The Farrar Class,” “The Geikie Class,” “The Ellicott Class,” “The Stalker Class.” A famous Christian may give the class its designation: “The Apollos Class,” “The Augustine Class,” “The Calvin Class,” “The Gladstone Class.” It will be seen that a class name may mean much. It should be chosen with care, and then—translated into action!

NEIGHBORING CLASSES

An adult Bible class should be mindful of other classes of the same character. They may be weaker,

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and need help. They may be stronger, and can give help. In any case, the fellowship may become very precious. The teachers of neighboring adult classes should know one another, and might meet occasionally for the discussion of common problems. Joint socials may be arranged, the talented members of both classes contributing to the evening's entertainment. There may be an exchange of teachers now and then. When one class celebrates an anniversary, delegates from the other classes may be invited. If the churches are near enough, a joint session of the two classes may be arranged now and then for the study of a lesson. Each class is sure to profit from this interchange of ideas and kindly offices.

ADULT CLASS ESPRIT DE CORPS

A strong class spirit is of great value; indeed, no class can succeed without it. It insures regular attendance, the obtaining of new members, and continued interest in the work. How may it be brought about?

Much depends upon the teacher, but he will get the aid of the most magnetic and influential members of the class, forming them into a social committee.

The best, practically the only, way to form a class spirit is to do things together. Select some object of charity for which the class will delight to work. Get the class, as a class, to undertake some improvement in the church, such as new chandeliers, or a new bay-window in the parsonage, or the beautifying of the church yard. Carry on a lecture course for the village. Become interested in a city mission and aid it personally and financially. Enlarge your classroom. Obtain a reference library for the Sunday-school. Hold regular class socials. Get the class to go off together on pleasant excursions and to valuable lectures. Entertain

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other adult classes. There are numberless ways of fusing the class by means of common activities, and all of them will pay richly for whatever trouble is taken.

AN EXCHANGE OF TEACHERS

Adult classes in near-by churches, even in near-by towns, should work together in many ways, and especially in the rather frequent exchange of teachers. No advantage that a teacher could gain from absolute continuity of teaching is equal to the gain of fresh fields now and then. He will learn much from the new class. He will get an insight into different ways of doing things by talks with officers and members, and by observation. At the same time, both classes will be stimulated by new voices and new ways of presenting truth.

THE PASTOR IN THE CLASS

Often the pastor will deem it a rare privilege to teach the adult class, though of course his many other duties may render this impossible. The class, however, should elect him an honorary member, and show him that they value his presence, and desire it earnestly whenever he can give it.

The teacher will do well to go to the pastor and ask him to enliven the sessions, when he can attend, by asking questions frequently, and stimulating the class by many brief comments. Naturally, the members will turn to him as an expert, and he can help greatly by imparting some of the fruit of his special studies; but he can help the most by brisk little bits of good cheer and brightness, interpolated here and there during the lesson hour.

It is a good plan to get the pastor to teach an occasional lesson. When his consent is obtained, make much



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of the coming treat. Speak of it in the class several weeks in advance, advertise it in the church paper, and make sure of a very full attendance of the class and of visitors. The pastor can greatly help the adult class, and the adult class can greatly help the pastor in his work.

A REFERENCE LIBRARY

Many large adult classes could easily and profitably establish reference libraries of their own. Even the smaller adult classes might gather a few reference books and hold them for common use. If the school has no reference library, the teachers and the older pupils may be invited to share the use of the books with the adult class.

This library may be built up gradually; and it is astonishing how fast books accumulate when a steady effort is made to get them. Hold a "book social" of the class, and invite every member to come bringing some desirable book. Post in the classroom a list of such books, and let each volume be crossed off as a member agrees to get it. Thus there will be no duplicates. After the library is opened, charge two cents for the use of a book for two weeks, with the fine of one cent a day for retaining the book longer. This will provide for additions to the library faster than you would believe possible.

A librarian should be appointed. The books should be kept in the classroom, and should be readily accessible to all. When the librarian is not present, every member should feel free to take a book, charging himself with it on a piece of paper left for the purpose, and leaving his two cents.

The use of the library will largely depend upon the teacher. If he often assigns to the members of the

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class topics for essays, talks, and debates, and tells him what books in the library will furnish the necessary information, the library will flourish, and will become a great help to the class.

Such a library should come to contain a large Bible dictionary, a work on Bible geography, histories of the Jews, lives of Christ and Paul, works on Eastern customs, various versions of the Bible, and of course as many commentaries as the class can afford, both in series and single books.

THE MATTER OF VENTILATION

Few of our churches have been built with reference to large adult classes in the Sunday-school, and such classes are often confined to quite inadequate quarters. They suffer more from lack of ventilation, usually, than any other part of the school. The teacher, absorbed in his task, is liable to overlook the difficulty, and should be on his guard here. Usually he sits facing the windows, and the class with their backs to them, with a row of chairs close against them. Those farthest from the windows ask to have them opened, and those near the windows shiver.

It is well to appoint a ventilating committee, consisting of a single sensible and courageous person. When the air grows bad, he may call a halt in the proceedings, and the class may rise and talk together while the windows are opened wide and the air is changed. Much may be done by the quiet use of the door and transom, and also by the use of window-ventilators. Fresh air means fresh thought.

XI

THE OUTSIDE WORK OF THE CLASS

THE adult class is a failure if it lives for itself alone, or even for Bible study alone. As is so often said, but so seldom lived, expression must follow impression, practice must attend precept. Those classes that engage in some generous enterprise outside the recitation room are far more likely than others to be zealous and successful at their work inside the recitation room. Their Bible has become vitalized by contact with life. Many genuine problems come up for class discussion from out of this enterprise which the class has undertaken together. Bible light is sought with the interest of a realized need. The class is bound together by working together, perhaps by meeting opposition together. All the finest elements of Christian character are augmented and trained. Talents for practical work are discovered, and many who could never make a speech before the class prove here of the highest service.

No enterprise is finer for this purpose, if the class is suitably situated, than the conducting or the aiding of a city mission. I have very full knowledge of a large and successful adult class whose very lifeblood was such an enterprise. When a city mission is taken up by an adult class, its members become perforce interested in practical evangelism. They see what the gospel can do, and their faith is enormously strengthened. They are abundantly supplied with illustrations of present-day apostolic triumphs to place alongside the records of the prophets and apostles of old.

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The work also brings them into touch with human need. Women of the class minister to the wives and children of drunkards as the men help the drunkards themselves. It is a settlement work, even though the class is a suburban one. It is going out into the highways and hedges even when the class is itself among the green hedges of the country and those it is trying to reach are in the thick of the crowded city.

The adult class may take upon itself the entire support of a mission, or it may unite with other adult classes in supporting one, or it may only do what it can in an irregular way. If the class is large, and if its support is not needed by agencies already in existence, it may well start a new mission all its own. Take no step without careful inquiry and advice, but nevertheless be bold, and branch out. I speak of "city" missions, but this work can be done anywhere; for evangelistic work is everywhere needed, whether called by the formal name of a "mission" or not.

If not a mission, or in addition to a mission, some charitable operations furnish admirable outside work for an adult class. A hospital may be taken under its wing, or an old ladies' home, or an orphans' home, or an asylum, or a poorhouse. Such institutions are greatly in need of helpful ministries, and their inmates are always deeply grateful for what is done for them. These services are most fruitful, especially in the cases of children and the sick. How could they help being, when, as we know, they are blessed with our Saviour's most eager approval?

In beginning such work, let a sympathetic committee study the situation with care, get acquainted, learn the needs, and gradually work in this and that member of the class, getting them interested in individuals. Finally a full and systematic plan will be formed for

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visits and gifts and ministries and reports. Such work as this will enrich the class beyond measure.

The best way to aid the poor who can work is to give them work to do. In a large city class there are sure to be young men and women who need a lift in their careers. In every community there are workmen out of employment, and not always the lazy and incompetent. A quiet, Christian employment agency would be one of the greatest boons to any community, and it would be certain to find a large amount of genuine gospel work to do. An employment committee might well be formed in every adult class, consisting of the employers among the members, and those who have interest with employers.

But there are also poor who cannot work, who are too old or too young or too feeble. There are widows and orphans. There are emergencies caused by sudden deaths, by fires, by sickness and accidents. A relief committee may well be part of the equipment of every adult class. This committee should have a generous fund to draw upon, a fund not requiring the vote of the class for its disposal, but to be used quietly by the committee as the needs arise.

The public schools afford another legitimate interest of an adult class, and a parents' association may be formed, to meet monthly for an evening's discussion of the educational progress of the town. The live topics are many, such as the discipline of the schools, the moral influences thrown around the children, the work given them to do at home, the question of overcrowding, the pressure of examinations, and the like. In such an association teachers and parents will come to a mutual understanding, and by these discussions the public schools will be advanced immeasurably in real power and usefulness.

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In this connection a public playground for the children of the place may be established. The towns that have such a wise provision are shamefully few. Few things mean more for the healthful development of Young America, and no more Christian task than this could well be imagined.

Akin to this enterprise is the "safe and sane" celebration of the Fourth of July, which the adult classes may take in hand where no other agency is acting, or in coöperation with other agencies.

In spite of all that has been said in advocacy of this organization, few towns have a village improvement society. No agency is better able to start and maintain one than the adult Bible class. A village improvement society will do wonders for an inert, run-down village. It is likely to begin with inspiring a general clean-up of front and back yards, streets and gutters. It will organize a waste-paper brigade among the school children. It will place waste-paper receptacles here and there about the streets.

Then will come the setting out of trees, the making of flower beds, the removal of fences, the general beautifying of the place. A little park may be fashioned. A village playground may be established. The grounds around the railroad station may be adorned. You may rise to the dignity of a town assembly hall. New paving may be laid down, and concrete sidewalks. A fire engine may be installed. There is no end of triumphs when a live village improvement society gets to work. And, though the officers and members of the society will be the responsible directors of all this, the adult class will be the energizing power for many months.

Very likely your town needs a free library. The adult class will not wait to persuade Mr. Carnegie,

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but it may hire a vacant room, and contribute and beg for books enough to furnish a respectable nucleus of a library. Give an entertainment, or a series of entertainments, for this good object. Put in pictures and games, and invite the boys in. Get periodicals contributed by those who become interested. Let the members of the class take turns in keeping the library and recreation room open through the evenings, and make the place a saving center for the young people and the village loafers.

Equally with the library, a lecture course is needed to arouse the sluggish mental life of many communities. I do not mean a course filled merely with concerts and sleight-of-hand entertainments and comic readings and little plays, but a course of real value made up of lectures on public questions, on travel and science and biography and history, such as the lyceum courses on which our fathers and grandfathers grew strong. The class will sell tickets in advance, and so make sure of success.

Civic work may be greatly needed in your town. Its government may have come into bad hands. The laws, especially the temperance laws, may be poorly enforced. Graft may be more than suspected. The town government may be a town disgrace.

Why is not this a splendid and appropriate work for your adult class to take up? Let its male members go into the primaries, scrutinize the candidates, and work hard for the best men. A few determined men, working together, can often carry through a candidate or a ticket or a measure.

Why not organize a good-government league, with the adult class as a nucleus? Or, you may use the village improvement society as a basis. How such work would increase the interest in all the lessons, of

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both Old and New Testaments, that deal with good and bad rulers! And there is hardly a lesson but has bearings on civic work and would gain zest from such an undertaking as this.

A temperance campaign may be needed—it usually is. There is need to free your town absolutely from all connection with liquor. You will need to labor along two lines: personal pledge-signing, and the removal of the saloon temptation. The women here will labor side by side with the men of the class. You will need to obtain speakers and hold mass meetings, to distribute convincing reading-matter, and to do a large amount of personal work. It may take years to work up to the temperance ideal in your town, but how such an endeavor would inspire the class! The temperance lessons would be the most popular of all, and there is hardly a lesson but would be found full of temperance applications.

In short, the ideal adult class is a forum for all the civic and social life of your community. In its meetings you may thresh out all sorts of large problems. It will aim as far as such a class can be supposed to have influence, and then farther. There is probably no other or better organization for the various undertakings I have suggested, unless the church itself can be persuaded to take them up; and the adult class will be the persuading agent. And even if the church should undertake these operations, the adult class would still be the nucleus of zeal and efficiency.

XII

THE DENOMINATIONAL RELATIONS OF THE CLASS

ADULT Bible classes are coming to be important assets of denominations. There is no reason why they should not be so, and increasingly. They bring together in compact organizations especially earnest, active, wide-awake Christians. They meet weekly to discuss religious matters, and denominational questions are sure to arise. They get hold of many men; often they consist entirely of men. They are very enthusiastic organizations. Thus the adult class has great potentialities, which its leaders should turn into channels helpful to the denomination that fosters it, and to which most of its members have sworn fealty. Let us consider how this is best to be done.

I would have a denominational committee in every adult Bible class. This committee should be made up of men and women who are in touch with the large denominational affairs, and who are able to interest others in them. The committee will know what denominational enterprises are planned, what are the triumphs the denomination is winning, what are its needs for money and for men. The literature and history and principles of the denomination will be familiar to such a committee. Its members will be ready to bring before the class the denominational opportunities and accomplishments. As to its size, three would make a good working committee.

The teacher should bear this committee in mind,

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and often make or find suitable opportunities for it to introduce its important topics. Often the lesson leads up to them naturally, and many fine illustrations of the Bible may be found in the activities of the modern men of our churches. A favorite item in the teacher's teaching schedule should be, "The application of this lesson to our denomination."

Sometimes the denominational committee will use the adult class merely as a nucleus in getting the church to take up some work that it should be doing for the denomination. For instance, the mission board may have asked each church to raise a definite sum, in order to bring it out of debt. The denominational committee may raise what it can among the members of the adult class, and then go before the church and say, "The adult class has made this start; will not the church take up the matter and complete the quota?" Or, it may be a question of the change of denominational policy in some particular, on which each church is supposed to act. The adult class may debate the matter, and, if it is thought best, may pass a resolution which will be presented to the church for its discussion and adoption or rejection. Or, a great denominational leader may die, and the committee will have the class devote some time to a consideration of his life and the lessons to be drawn from it. Then it may suggest that the subject may well be taken up in a church meeting, and the matter already given to the class may serve as the nucleus of such a meeting.

In addition to such work, the denominational committee will have in charge the direct relation of the class to the denomination. If any point in the operations of the class is likely to be of wide interest, a note regarding it will be sent to the denominational papers. Subscriptions to the denominational newspapers and

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missionary magazines may be taken by the committee, the entire congregation being canvassed. The committee will learn what the denominational publishing house has published, will keep its catalogues in places where they will be accessible to all church-members, and will have on exhibition samples of the books and pamphlets that are likely to be most helpful to your church.

Sometimes the denominational committee may well get the teacher to allot fifteen minutes of each class session, for a time, to a course of extra lessons on denominational history. A special teacher may conduct the entire course, or you may have a series of speakers, each treating an epoch of the history. This may be followed by courses on denominational principles, or denominational organization, or denominational missions. One course a year would be enough, consisting of eight or ten lessons. Most denominations have books or pamphlets which are available as text-books; and if this is not the case in your denomination, the subject could be taught by means of lectures and the taking of notes.

But work for the denomination as represented in the local church with which the class is connected is of especial importance. For the guidance and inspiration of such work it will be well to select a special committee to be known as the church committee, or perhaps as the pastor's aid committee. This committee will be in close touch with the pastor and the church committees, and will keep its eyes open for opportunities of service. Here are some of the things it may do.

It may carry on the church paper. Some adult classes are doing this with great success. With the help of subscriptions, it is easy for the men of the class to obtain for the church paper enough advertisements

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to carry it financially. For more than a decade my own church has enjoyed a very useful little four-page weekly, paid for entirely in this way, with never more than three columns of advertising, and always applications for advertising space far in advance. The aid of the younger classes of the school may be invoked to fold the paper and get it to the subscribers, if you do not mail it. An editorial committee may be appointed, or the church committee may edit the paper as well as publish it. It will not be merely a class organ, though the class will be given generous space in it, but it will report and assist all church work, doing wonders for your church in all its branches.

Some adult classes are great helps to the Sunday evening service, which is a special problem in most churches. The church committee may obtain interesting musical features, and advertise them, together with the minister's topics. Special speakers may occasionally be obtained by the committee, when the pastor wishes this assistance, and some of these will be developed by the class work. The themes of the Sunday evening service may often grow out of the class discussions, and some of the talks, essays, debates and other class exercises may be repeated before the whole church on Sunday evening. Indeed, even if the adult class is not thus closely allied with the Sunday evening service, the pastor may well watch its sessions for suggestions for Sunday evening.

The adult class may give much aid to the church socials. It is in the habit of conducting bright socials and it may repeat some of its plans at the church socials in coöperation with the church social committee, or it may from time to time give socials to the church members. At any rate, the social committee of the adult class should work with the church social committee

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in making strangers feel at home in the church socials. The calling committee of the adult class will also coöperate with whatever church committee has that matter in charge, and arrange its calls to work in with theirs.

The church nominating committee may well turn to the adult class for its officers and heads of committees. These should have consecration, energy, and Bible-based characters; and where can these be found if not in the adult class? The class will often discuss the duties of these church offices as they meet in their studies their historical origin, and so they will be the better prepared to enter upon them.

In the important matter of church advertising the publicity committee of the adult class may be of much service. If it is not provided for in the church machinery, and it seldom is, the class publicity committee may take entire charge of it. Thus also the class financial committee may aid the church treasurer or financial committee; the evangelistic committee of the class may aid the evangelistic agencies of the church, and all the other operations of the class may be made, under the leadership of the church committee, to minister to the progress of the church.

Indeed, this relationship may well be so strong and helpful that the teacher or president of the class will be made a member of the official board of the church *ex-officio*; and if this is not done, he will be at least an honored member of the pastor's cabinet.

If the adult class is large, it may rightly ask for the favor of having an annual sermon and recognition day in the church. If it is small, it may properly seek for this advertising for the good of the church.

I know that ministers are much troubled by the unwise tendency to force topics upon them and that

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"days" for this and that have increased in number till the minister's own initiative is threatened with extinction. But most ministers will be glad of the special interest of a large body of men and women, and of the special notice they will give to a service. The occasion will afford the minister the opportunity of getting into touch with new hearers. Besides, the interests of the adult class are as wide as Christianity. If the class is given a word of greeting and a bit of encouragement, the rest of the message may be on any Biblical or social theme.

The class should make much of the day by wide announcement of it. Stir up a full attendance of the class, using the occasion to bring back members that have grown lax. Send special invitations to those whom you want to interest in the class. Sit all together in the front pews. Carry your banner, if the class has one. If you have a class motto, place it on the wall. If you have a class hymn, sing it together during the exercises. The class president may sit with the pastor in the pulpit, and may read the Scriptures. At one part of the proceedings the class may repeat its motto in concert, or read in concert one of the hymns that are to be sung. And if these plans are carried out, the day will be one of the best your church has ever known.

By all these means the ideal adult class will be firmly attached to the church and the denomination. It will not live an isolated existence, but will throw all of its splendid powers into the organized work of the great body of Christians in the world, thus accomplishing far more than it could by itself, and gaining for itself a wonderful access both of enthusiasm and of stability.

XIII

THE WORLD-WIDE OUTLOOK OF THE CLASS

It is not enough for the adult class to be in touch with the rest of the Sunday-school, its church, or even its denomination. For the prosperity of the adult class and the fullness of its understanding of the Bible, it, like all other Christian agencies, must reach out into the whole world. It must be a missionary agency or it is not a Christian agency, and missions must be an inseparable part of its plans and its accomplishments.

World-wide missions, home and foreign, make the best possible illustrations of that missionary book, the Bible. The teacher may well appoint a committee of the class to look them up for each lesson. It may be called the missionary illustrations committee, and its membership (one member may suffice) will be changed monthly or quarterly. The report of this committee will be a regular feature of the class programmes. It will give illustrations from present conditions and events on the mission fields, and from the men and history of the past.

Special talks may be given before the class regarding the great events on the mission fields as they occur—such events as the Boxer massacres in China or the Armenian massacres in Turkey, the revolutions in Turkey and Persia, the separation of church and state in France, the annexation of Korea by Japan, the establishment of the Chinese republic. If the matter applies to the lesson for the day as an illustration, this

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talk will come into the lesson programme; otherwise it will be given before or after the regular lesson exercises.

I have already said how helpful it is for an adult class to have a close relation with some city mission. Equally helpful is it for the class to have some special interest of its own on a home or foreign mission field, or both. Some member of the class may have gone forth as a missionary, and you will wish to adopt his field; or, some member of the class may have a relative on the mission field in whom the class may become specially interested. The church may have a missionary under its special care, and the class will of course adopt that missionary as its own. If none of these conditions exist, the class may correspond with the denominational mission boards and learn what definite work they would like to assign to the class. Letters and pictures and reports will come from the chosen field, and this intensive work will greatly add to the interest the class will feel in the extensive work of missions.

Usually the adult class is so large, and so independent in its methods, as to make advisable such missionary activities separate from those of the main school; but often the gifts of the adult class are needed in the main school, and the school authorities will rightly prefer that they should all go into that channel. In either case, we must remember that the adult class gets hold of many that are not as yet members of the church, and we must win their purses as well as their hearts for missions.

The best way to raise money for the missionary and other purposes of the adult class is to present a budget at the beginning of the class year. This budget will consist of a reasonable estimate of what the class may be expected to raise, divided among such interests as

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the class expenses, the special class work that it may undertake, the special class missionary object if it has one, the school missionary objects, and the mission and other boards of the denomination. Each member of the class will be asked to pledge some weekly amount, however small, to be divided in an agreed ratio among the objects determined upon. Little envelopes may be given out, each numbered with the number of the member receiving it, in which the weekly offering is to be placed.

The mission studies of the adult class must be so managed as not to conflict with the other missionary work of the church, but aid it. If there is a monthly missionary concert, the class will furnish recruits for its programmes. If there is a woman's missionary society in the church, the class will add to its membership. The missionary interest of the class will be so turned as to add to the church's gifts to denominational missions. Any special work that the class may undertake will be taken up with the full approval of the pastor. Such work is suited mainly to large classes, containing many who are not church members, whom it is advisable thus to draw into the personal missionary interest.

An investigation of one hundred widely separated adult Bible classes showed that their average annual gift to missions was one hundred and twenty-five dollars. If all adult classes should do as well as that, the aggregate would be several millions each year. We should do it, if we realized the power of united action; but each class is likely to think that its gift is so small that it does not count. In any great movement such as missions the hardest step is to arouse a sense of individual responsibility. It is easy to see the greatness of the task and the littleness of any one class; it

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is not so easy to see the greatness of those littles when added together. We have a sense of the big world, though vague, and a clear sense of a sand grain, but not a sense of the sand grains as making up the big world. It is the work of the missionary committee to create this sense.

Some lessons tend toward home missions and some toward foreign missions, and it may be well in some classes to have two committees, one to promote home missions and the other to promote foreign missions. A home and a foreign object for contributions may be chosen, if the class is large enough.

The missionary committee will find placards useful in promoting its work. These placards may give the noble sayings of great missionaries. They may bear missionary texts from the Bible. Now and then they may be spurs to giving, such as: "Our budget calls for \$—— this year. The year is (half) over. We have given \$——. What are YOU going to do about it?"

The class might find it a great advantage and stimulus to have five minutes of world-wide outlook at each meeting. The teacher will insert the exercise where he wishes, at the beginning or close of the session, or, if the topic to be treated is suitable for illustrating the lesson, then he will use it in the course of the lesson exposition. This outlook will be given by different speakers, perhaps a new speaker every month.

The world-wide outlook of the adult class will not be confined by any means to missionary events. The great secular interests also have point for the adult class. The revolution in Portugal, the airship developments, the discovery of wireless telegraphy, the discovery of radium, the reaching of the North Pole, the accession of George V.—all such events have their application to the Bible and their lessons for the Bible

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student. Special "world reporters" may be appointed to summarize the chief secular events of the week, viewing them in the light of the Bible; or, if you do not go into the matter so elaborately, the teacher will bear the matter in mind, and ask this and that pupil to make application to the lesson of these important secular happenings.

Almost all the lessons will find this world-wide outlook most helpful, but especially those bearing on the kingdom of Christ, on the missionary work of Paul, and on the development of the Jewish kingdom in the Old Testament times.

I hardly see how anyone can teach the Bible without a careful and diligent reading of newspapers. Not a paper but is full of modern parables. In all the events recorded either God or Satan is plainly at work. Current history often duplicates ancient history, or is strangely contrasted with it. The teacher will find in his "daily" a fine commentary on his teacher's "monthly."

Missionary biographies contribute most admirably to this world-wide outlook, and nothing is better to illustrate Bible biography. Outside of distinctive books on the Bible, the teacher could have no more suggestive reading than missionary biographies. It may be helpful if I name a few men in the chief mission fields of the world, whose biographies are conspicuously fine. For Africa I would name Livingstone, Moffat, Hannington, and Alexander Mackay; for Japan: Neesima, Brown, Verbeck; China: Morrison, Griffith John, Gilmour, Nevius; the Pacific islands: Williams, Patteson, Paton, Chalmers; Turkey: Schauffler, Hamlin; Persia: Grant, Miss Fiske; India: Carey, Martyn, Duff, Heber, Ramabai; Arabia: Falconer,

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French; Burma: Judson, Boardman; South America: Gardiner.

I am tempted also to urge in addition to missionary biography the reading of general histories of missions and accounts of missionary countries, such as Thompson's stirring story of Moravian missions and Dr. Smith's "China in Convulsion"; but the field here is so vast that I dare not even name representative books.

This use of the world-wide outlook is a great stimulus to a class. It gives dignity to it, and a sense of the universality of the Bible and of Christianity. It attracts the men especially. It allies with religion the world of politics and business and commerce and invention and all other manly employments, and shows that religion is as manly as they are.

There is only one danger in entering this field, and that is, that the illustration may overwhelm the truth that is illustrated. We must watch against this. I have known Bible classes to become classes merely in current events, or political and sociological debating clubs. We must keep the parable in its place, remembering that it is only the shadow of the sun of truth, and that the symbol is always less than the reality.

XIV

THE SPIRITUAL WORK OF THE CLASS

MUCH has been said in these chapters about the use of illustrations of the Bible from secular life, and the use also of many speakers from secular employments. All this is necessary, in order that we may get into touch with men and women, and meet them where their interests lie. But all this is profitless unless, meeting them where they are, the class brings them where Christ is. The ideal adult class will aim to interest people in the Bible and the Sunday-school and the church and denomination and missions; but all this is summed up, and more, when we say that it will aim to bring people to Christ.

The first and most obvious suggestion is that the regular sessions of the class should be made strongly evangelistic. In preparing a lesson the teacher will have in mind those of the class who are not Christians, their doubts, their objections, their hesitancies. He will bring into each lesson what he can of argument for their doubt, and spurs to the Christian confession.

A definite evangelistic appeal may occasionally be made in the class sessions, but tactfully, of course. It will never be made personally, as the non-Christians in the class are probably few. But the teacher may exclaim, for instance: "What a splendid Christian Joseph would have made! With his frankness, how ready he would have been to acknowledge Christ! How he would have rejoiced in Christian companionship and in the work of the church!" After studying

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Peter's error that led Christ to say, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" the teacher may speak of the evident genuineness of a passage that thus casts discredit upon the leading apostle, and show how the same argument applies to all the Bible, whose heroes are often exhibited in their true characters as erring men. Such opportunities for argument as these are occurring all the time in our sessions.

The teacher will also make private evangelistic appeals. It is easy for him to introduce the subject of the last lesson, and to ask: "What did you think of that argument? Did I put it too strongly? Was I right? Then why not carry out the logical conclusion in your life by joining the church of Christ?" It is hard for one who does not often talk about religious matters to break the ice for an evangelistic conversation, but a Sunday-school teacher is talking about religious matters with his class for an hour every week.

Prayer in the meetings of the class is most helpful in promoting the spiritual effect of the lessons. When the teacher wishes to gain this end especially, he may open the class exercises with prayer, or close them with prayer, or ask some one pupil or several pupils to lead in prayer; or he may even interject a prayer at some important point in the middle of a session. Prayer should be offered at the beginning and close of a new series of lessons, and in connection with lessons of special importance, such as those on the crucifixion, the resurrection, Pentecost, and the sending out of the first missionaries.

The spiritual growth of a class is prompted by a spirit of reverence throughout its exercises. I well remember the teacher of a certain adult class whose very way of saying "Our Saviour," and other names of the Deity, was an anthem of reverent praise. Light

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treatment of the very serious and majestic subjects that form the chief matters of discussion in an adult class is easy, but is very hurtful. I would not have the session sad or solemn, but I would have it earnest and thoughtful, and thus it will be all the fuller of real joy.

The work of the adult class should make strongly for church membership. Of course you will aim to get into the class those who are not already church members, and their work in the class should be a stepping-stone to the church. They will form fellowship with church members. They will gain an introduction to Christian service. They will get a start in Christian expression. The rest is comparatively easy. An invitation to membership in the church, to the confession of Christ before men, should often be given in the class—given in happy, tactful ways that will not reflect upon any one; given just as comrades would ask other comrades to come in with them and be altogether one of them.

The evangelistic committee may promote cottage prayer meetings at the homes of the members of the class. This will probably be a new work in your church and community. Hold the meetings in all the different neighborhoods, and crowd the rooms with those who live in the vicinity, not merely the members of the class. The meetings will naturally lead to the enlargement of the class, and they will be exceedingly valuable in the increase of Christian zeal and of the number of Christian testimonies and confessions of Christ. It is comparatively easy to speak in these informal gatherings and to few people, so that these cottage prayer meetings will gradually train the members of the class so that they will be able and willing to speak in the larger prayer meetings of the church.

The spiritual tone of the class will be greatly lowered

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by the introduction of certain types of discussion, dealing with points about which the ablest scholars differ and which are trifling at the best, and neglecting the weightier matters of the Bible and religion. Every class has some members who delight in profitless argumentation, and it is often hard to suppress them. The class should aid the teacher by ignoring these debaters when it can, and not taking up the gauntlet they are so fond of throwing down. The teacher must learn to say with firmness, "I do not believe that that matter would be helpful to the progress of the lesson thought, and we will discuss it together in private after the class session." At the same time the discussions in our adult classes should be free, frank, and fearless. While eliminating as far as possible the egotistical "crank," we must leave ample room for all sincere inquiry and reverent debate.

Whatever ministers to faith builds up the spiritual power of a class. The wise teacher will often introduce points of Christian evidences, arguments for Bible authenticity and for the great Christian doctrines. Sometimes these questions will be debated frankly, with a fair statement of opposing arguments, sure that the truth will triumph. Never accept destructive criticism without seeing what is said by the strongest men on the positive side. Make the adult class a reservoir of belief in your church, and it will be a fountain of spiritual power.

However, passing from these more or less indirect evangelistic methods, we must remember that here, as everywhere else, organized, systematic effort is the best way to get things done. "You must come," said some members of a Hindu young people's society. "You must come, for we are on a committee to get you!" In the spirit of that fine saying every adult Bible class

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will do well to appoint an evangelistic committee or personal workers' band.

In forming this committee or band it is best not to make any announcements before the class. Simply call together a nucleus of those, no matter how few, whose hearty sympathies, you are sure, will be with the work. It may be only two or three at first, to whom you will gradually add those who are like-minded. It is of the greatest importance that every member of the band shall be a soul-winner. The work of the band should be done in secret, as far as possible. No matter what triumphs of grace may be wrought through the band, let there be no publicity for its work unless you are sure that its work is done! And its work never will be done.

The band should meet regularly, and it will find once a fortnight perhaps the best interval. It should meet at the same place, usually; and if it meets at a private house, fewer questions will be asked by those who do not belong to its circle. Sunday afternoons will be a good time for the meetings.

That the meetings may be conducted in a business-like way, one of the band should be appointed to preside; but no other organization is needed. The teacher or the pastor would make, generally speaking, the best presiding officer.

The one essential for the success of the personal workers' band is that every member of it shall be engaged earnestly in trying to bring to Christ some one soul, and that he will endeavor to report at each meeting something that he has done to this great end since the last meeting. The meeting will consist of these reports from each member, taken in order, each report being followed by general consultation and suggestions

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regarding that person, together with much prayer throughout.

The knowledge that you are expected to report some evangelistic work accomplished each fortnight will be a powerful spur toward that work. You will use all wise methods. Chiefly, of course, you will talk to your friend face to face. But also, however, you will write letters, lend books, give tracts, and pray long and fervently in private for him. And what one cannot do another may accomplish. That is one great advantage of this coöperative work, that you can pass your tasks along when they become too heavy, exchanging the objects of your loving effort. A new voice, a fresh interest, will be most impressive, and will often win a long-sought victory.

The band will find it very profitable to spend part of each meeting in the definite study of evangelistic methods of work. One of the very best text-books is Trumbull's "Taking Men Alive." Another very delightful and helpful text-book is "II Timothy 2:15," by Rev. H. W. Pope. Others are Torrey's "How to Bring Men to Christ," and Howard Agnew Johnston's "Studies for Personal Workers." It is well to take up several of these books, one after the other. Each member of the class will have the book, and will read a chapter every fortnight. Some one will be appointed to question the band on the contents of the chapter, and to lead a discussion of the subject it introduces. In this way the band will grow in knowledge at the same time that it grows in practical ability.

If the band is faithful and persevering it will not be long before it is able to rejoice over definite and glorious results. Its members will find this the happiest work in which they ever engaged. When the church or the town attempts a general evangelistic campaign, the